

The 800 Squad

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Category: Halo

Genre: Humor, Sci-Fi

Language: English

Characters: OC

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2014-04-21 03:28:45

Updated: 2016-01-30 02:11:27

Packaged: 2016-04-27 04:57:31

Rating: M

Chapters: 18

Words: 63,074

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: The Sangheili 800 Squad is a group of rejects who just didn't make the cut. They've operated as a group of five for several years, but they're about to become a group of six. What will happen with the new rookie? You know the drill. R&R.

1. An Introduction

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><p>The Sangheili 800 Squad

****Prologue: An Introduction****

* * *

><p>It was a common saying in the Sangheili Military that the most honourable soldiers are the ones with the most medals.<p>

Unfortunately, some Sangheili grew up with their mother forgetting to tell them this.

Which was precisely why the Sangheili 800 Squad existed.

A few hundred years before the Covenant was assembled, there was a sudden influx of bad soldiers joining up, severely compromising the military, as the bad soldiers were currently outnumbering the good soldiers. So the ones controlling the military did the only thing they could do.

They formed a reject pile and gave it a fancy name.

It was called the 800 Squad because there had originally been only 800 Sangheili in the group, although there was some debate over whether it should actually be called a squad. But everyone agreed that '800 Squad' simply sounded better than '800 Battalion'.

The reason that there had been only 800 Sangheili was because soldiers were grouped into the 800 Squad according to intelligence (test results), field skills and mental health. If they were poor in all areas or downright **lacked** the attributes, then they were sent to the 800 Squad, allowing soldiers who passed at least one test able to continue.

With the 800 men assembled, they sent them all to a remote section of Sanghelios, where they wouldn't be able to do any harm.

However, what command failed to foresee was that putting 800 idiots, psychopaths and poor leaders into one place would cause a lot of damage.

So by the time the Covenant was formed, there were only 300 soldiers left in the 800 Squad.

By the time the Covenant went to war with the humans, there was only one soldier left, who soon died of old age.

You'd think that would've solved the problem, right?

Wrong.

In 2546, a single Sangheili soldier had failed in all three areas for the first time since the 800 Squad's creation. The Prophets didn't know what to do with him until some of the Sangheili remembered what they used to do and recreated the Sangheili 800 Squad, depositing the soldier on a planet with an abandoned base completely alone.

The soldier was immediately aware that the base he had been dumped on was a mess. The base was in shambles due to no-one repairing it, the area was snow-covered, making it hard to actually find the base and there were dead, rotting bodies everywhere.

This soldier was a productive one though. He made it his duty to fully repair the base, a task he knew would take months, even years, but he felt that he was up to the challenge.

The first thing he did was collect all the dead bodies and dump them unceremoniously off a nearby cliff.

The next order of business was to get the base up and running, a task which proved to be more difficult, but he eventually managed to get the AC working. He then went from there to get the lights up and running, then moved onto the Wi-Fi. Eventually, he managed to get the base completely functional. He even added a small feature to the outside of the base in order to melt snow during the winter.

It had taken about four months to do all this. By this time, command had found another reject to get rid of.

* * *

><p>August, 2548 (Human Calender)

1446 Hours

Somewhere in Slipspace

* * *

><p>Atar 'Kaham had originally completed all three tests and gotten into the military at the young age of (twenty-eight human years), wanting to prove his honour and glory. He had done so in multiple battles, very quickly climbing the ladder of success.<p>

He had distinguished himself during the Human-Covenant war, in that time earning himself the honourable rank of General and the surname 'Kahamee. He had earned this for single-handedly killing a human 'Spartan' and somehow staying alive afterwards.

However, near the end of 2547, during the battle of Skopje, Atar and most of his men had been decimated by another 'Spartan' and had only survived by sheer luck after having fallen off a cliff.

His wounds were eventually repaired, but the field medics had noticed that there was a possibility that Atar might have gotten brain damage from the fall. Since Atar was a very good soldier, the head of Sangheili command didn't want to believe it, so he set out to prove the medics wrong by having Atar sit the entry test again.

Unfortunately, all he did was prove the medics right, because Atar failed all three tests, leaving no choice but to put him in the 800 Squad.

That's where he was going right now.

Atar was on a small ship, waiting for it to get to the planet. He was not happy about this situation at all. So someone falls off a cliff and gets brain damage. So what? He was still a good soldier, he knew how to shoot a gun after all, so what was this for?

Eventually, the ship reached the planet and dumped him off before leaving. He was allowed to take a few of his possessions, including his concussion rifle, his plasma pistol, his USB and his driver's license.

As Atar walked to the base, he remembered that command had told him that there was another soldier who lived there. He couldn't remember his name, but he did remember that he was quite self-sufficient.

He could clearly see that, since the base that had once been covered in snow and ice and dead bodies was now clear of all debris, shiny purple metal sparkling in the sunlight.

Or what was left of it, with the clouds and everything.

A purple figure was walking out of the base, looking at Atar, who assumed that this was the guy. He walked over to him and saw that he was a Special Operations Sangheili with standard-issue armour, except

painted purple.

"Uhâ€¦ may I help you, Sir?" The Sangheili asked nervously. Two years of being alone had reduced his sociability levels significantly.

Atar nodded. "I am General Atar, your new commander."

The Sangheili blinked. "Huh? Commander?"

"Affirmative. I was sent here after taking and failing the test."

"Butâ€¦ but you're a General." The Sangheili said, confused. "Rejects shouldn't be able to reach the rank of a General."

"Rejects also shouldn't reach the rank of Special Operations." Atar countered.

The Sangheili looked at his armour. "This? I got it off of a dead guy due to mine not functioning properly."

"â€¦Oh." Atar got taken off guard from this, but recovered quickly. "Anyway, what's important is that I'm here, okay? Let's say no more about it."

"Yes sir."

"Good. Now what's your name?"

"Trac 'Erosd, sir. But I'd prefer to be called 'Tracer'."

"Tracerâ€¦" Atar would have smiled if he could. He was starting to like this soldier already. "Well Tracer, you've done a fine job of repairing the base."

Tracer perked up. "Thanks sir! But I'm not finished yetâ€¦"

Atar and Tracer quickly formed a good working relationship that was bordering on friendship. They both set to work on getting the base to full order, repairing the weapons, vehicles and even the minor things. But they both knew that even with the two of them working, it would still take way too long to get the base completely fixed.

Luckily for them, they would soon be getting a new teammate.

Miara 'Lano was quite rebellious, even as a child. She disliked that females had to stay at home while the males went off and fought, so she attempted to join the army. It took a while, but eventually she managed to get in.

To her outrage though, the leaders didn't like the idea of a female being on the front lines, so they automatically put her in the Sangheili 800 Squad.

Atar, at first, was stunned that the military had actually allowed a female in, but got over it eventually. Tracer was just glad for some more help and welcomed her as though she was an ordinary soldier.

It soon became clear that Miara hated being handicapped. She liked to do even the toughest of jobs and would obey any direction given to her. She and Tracer would usually spend time rebuilding the vehicles and weapons.

Miara, as it turned out, loved weapons that had something to do with fire, so Tracer used leftover parts from weapons and vehicles to create a flamethrower for her, which she was very enthusiastic about.

Over time, both Tracer and Miara were getting closer and closer to each other and probably would have become a couple if it weren't for a new arrival.

Utarz 'Lano was Miara's older brother. Both Atar and Tracer assumed that he was going to be similar to his sister. They couldn't have been more wrong.

Utarz, as it had turned out, had been forced to join the army by his parents, as they felt it was his duty. Trouble was, Utarz was nothing like other Sangheili. He had no regard for honour, was lazy, drank a lot and spent a lot of time in the brothels in the Sangheili underworld. In short, he was an idiot.

On top of all that, he was stubbornly insubordinate and refused to call Atar 'sir'. He soon became generally disliked by everyone and loathed by Atar.

He wasn't a valuable asset to the team and actually hindered them from doing their jobs rather than helping them. Unfortunately, the next recruit was even ****worse.****

Repora 'Herno had a mysterious past that no-one knew about. He hadn't told anyone, even when threatened. But whatever had happened in his past had caused him to go completely insane and somehow lose touch with reality and physics.

When he joined the army, he got the test score of -18 (the test had ten questions), his field skills demonstration got the supervising officer murdered and when evaluating his mental health, the examiners simply put down 'N/A'.

His placement in the 800 Squad made a lot of soldiers happy.

To make matters worse for the ones in the 800 Squad at the moment, Repora and Utarz had a mysterious history together that made them hate each other intensely. Whenever Utarz would make an insulting comment to him, Repora would go berserk and go on a rampage that would destroy parts of the base, usually undoing Tracer's hard work.

In an attempt to keep Repora away from the reconstruction, Tracer rebuilt a Ghost ('forgetting' to put guns on it) and gave it to Utarz that he could use whenever Repora was attacking him.

At first, it worked. But then Utarz started using it when Repora wasn't attacking him. He would drive the thing anywhere, sometimes knocking other things over. These things were usually involved in the reconstruction some way or another.

So it was basically back to square one.

They lived at the base for a further two years up to the human year 2550 when they were told that they were soon to get another recruit. Atar, Tracer and Miara were desperately hoping that he would at least have some manners. In a vain attempt to make a good impression, they started to make the base a bit tidier.

As usual though, something came up to disturb the planâ€¦

* * *

><p>February, 2550 (Human Calender)

1107 hours

Sangheili 800 Squad Main Base (SSMB 800)

* *
*

><p>"UUUUUUUUUTTTTTAAAAAARRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRZZZZZZZ!"

Atar looked up from the main computer.

Tracer looked up from the damaged wall.

Miara looked up from the collapsed tunnel.

One of the most predictable things about Repora was when he was about to go on a rampage. He would scream out something random (ranging from apple to Zimbabwe) and that was usually followed by a large and unnecessary amount of explosions or gunfire.

Sometimes the explosions and gunfire were preceded by Utarz riding up to Repora on his Ghost and saying, "You called?"

That was what was happening in this particular instance.

Repora stared at him, holding a heavy plasma cannon and a fuel rod gun attached to his back.

It took a few seconds for Utarz to get the point. "Oh, right! Shit!" He turned heel and zoomed off.

"YOU'LL NEVER ESCAPE ME!" Repora roared, firing his cannon.

In the control room, Atar sighed in frustration. Of all the days this had to happen, it just had to happen now.

The rookie would be arriving at the base later on today. They couldn't have Repora just shooting random fuel rods into the air, lest he kills someone.

Tracer and Miara rushed inside. They knew better than to stay outside during one of Repora's rampages.

"Gods aboveâ€¦" Atar muttered, turning to them both. "Tell me that

isn't Repora."

Tracer and Miara looked at each other, then back at Atar.

"Sorry sir." Tracer said. "He's starting off with automatics this time though, so there'll be less damage."

Atar growled. "Off all theâ€¦ one of you need to go and stop him, right now!"

"Shouldn't we let him blow off his steam this time?" Miara suggested. "I mean, that's what we usually do."

"And where does that leave us?"

"Almost all of our hard work undone." Miara replied. "But it's not as if we're not used to that."

"Yeah, we usually just work twice as hard to make up for it." Tracer added.

"We don't have the time to work twice as hard!" Atar snapped. "The recruit will be arriving here today! We need to contain this as quickly as possible!"

"Yes sir." Both Miara and Tracer replied.

"Good. I'll contact command to find out when the recruit will be arriving while one of you has to go and stop Repora. Understood?"

"Yes sir." Miara and Tracer said in sync. Atar nodded, satisfied, and left the room.

Tracer immediately turned to Miara. "Hey Miara, do you want to-?"

"Nope." She said, leaving. "I'll be sniper in case Repora doesn't listen."

"Thanks." Tracer muttered sarcastically.

* * *

><p>Years ago, Utarz used to be terrified by Repora's hostility. However, two whole years of dealing with Repora's rampage for every two days or so had dulled the fear and was replaced by boredom.<p>

Right now, he was putting little to no effort to dodging Repora's shots. In fact, he was pretty sure that he could dodge his shots even if he was standing still.

The same thing was going through Repora's mind, except it was a furious thought and one he didn't pay much attention to. Right now, all he was focused on was murdering Utarz once and for all. He had loathed him for too long and was going to kill him once and for all.

After all, who cared if he was a main character?

Then he got a lucky shot, or Utarz just fell asleep. Either way, a fuel rod hit the ground in front of him and Utarz, Ghost and all, flew into the air. He yelled and hit the ground with a thump.

Utarz looked at the Ghost and groaned. Tracer was going to kill him.

Repora chuckled evilly and took careful aim at Utarz.

"Fuck." Utarz grumbled.

"Well Utarz, it's been almost sixteen years now." Repora said. "Ever since that fateful night, I have dedicated myself to murdering you. And now, I will finally get that chance."

"Oh please," Utarz said. "With your aim, you couldn't hit a human spaceship if it was right in front of you."

"For your information, I was able to hit it after only three shots. So what do you say to that?"

"â€|Seriously?"

"Shut up." Repora said coldly. "Now prepare to die."

"Never!" Utarz shouted. "I will die as unprepared as possible and you can't do shit about it!"

"Well, that won't do, will it?" Repora said pleasantly. "I promise that if you prepare yourself for death, then I will kill you in the most painless way possible."

Utarz gave this some thought. "How painless?"

"Neck snap painless."

"Is that actually painless?" Utarz asked.

"Yup."

"How do you? Have you tried it?"

"Yep."

Utarz thought about it for a bit longer, then shrugged. "Well, okay then. I can go for that."

"Good!" Repora said happily. "Now prepare for a cold, dark void."

"Uh, Repora?" A voice asked from behind him.

Repora turned to face the voice, fuel rod gun in hand. "Yello?"

Tracer stared at the barrel of the loaded radioactive cannon. "First off, could you possibly put that thing away?"

"That's what she said." Utarz called up from below.

"I'll deal with you later Utarz!" Tracer called.

"It was pretty funny though." Repora said.

"Repora!" Tracer said sternly.

"Fine." Repora put the fuel rod gun on his back. "Happy now, you sissy?"

Tracer ignored the last comment. "What do you think you're doing?"

Repora thought about this. Then he said, "To quote another soldier quite like me, I don't think, I do."

Tracer looked around at the small amount of devastation. "I can see that."

"Then why ask?"

"Listen!" Tracer snapped angrily. "You do realise that the new guy is arriving today, right?!"

Repora blinked under his Ranger helmet. "New guy?" Realisation dawned on him. "Ohhhhhâ€¦ the new guy."

"Oh yeah." Utarz said from below, standing up. "Forgot about him."

"Exactly." Tracer said. "Imagine if he came to the base with you blowing stuff up. Imagine what will happen?"

"Nothing much."

Tracer decided to spell it out for him. "You would have missed yet another shot at Utarz and hit the carrier ship that was arriving with him on it and then he would've died with his last memory being of destruction and pain."

"That good or bad?" Repora asked.

Tracer hated talking to Repora. He seemed to go out of his way to act dumb or to disturb others with his talk of his previous crimes against nature.

"Bad." Tracer hissed.

"Oh, ok. So?"

"SO," Tracer said with a great deal of restraint, "we need you to ****stop****firing randomly and actually ****help**** ****us**** with the reconstruction of the base."

"But I want to kill Utarz!" Repora whined. "It'll only take a few minutes, I promise!"

"No it won't!" Tracer exploded. "You can't aim for shit! Your shots hit everything ****except**** ****Utarz!****"

"Yeah, wellâ€¦" Repora muttered.

"Look, all we're asking is for you to behave for the first few days that the rookie is here, okay?" Tracer said. "That's it. We'll tolerate that."

Repora thought about this, frowning (despite the fact that Sangheili couldn't frown). He was having trouble making a decision.

Time to call on Heaven and Hell.

A miniature version of Repora with angel wings and a halo appeared on Repora's right shoulder in a puff of white smoke and a POOF sound. "I believe you should go with him on this one. It'll set a temporary good impression." He said.

Another miniature version of him, except with devil horns and a forked tail, appeared on his left shoulder in a puff of maroon smoke, also with a POOF sound. "Don't listen to him! You're so close to killing Utarz! You won't have another chance at this!"

Part of Repora's psychosis involved multiple-personality disorder and constant hallucinations, which were Heaven and Hell. Heaven and Hell represented the good and evil of his conscience respectively, appearing whenever Repora 'called' upon them.

There was a third voice in his head called Purgatory, but he represented the neutral side of his brain, so he couldn't make decisions for himself, so Repora didn't call upon him very often, if ever.

"If you kill Utarz now, then the story won't be able to continue!" Heaven insisted.

"Bah!" Hell snorted. "Who cares about the story?"

Repora made his decision.

"Ok Tracer. I agree." He said.

"Ok, good, beca-

"As long as I can start shooting Utarz after the few days is up."

Tracer sighed. "Fine."

"YAY!" Repora skipped off somewhere, with Heaven smirking and Hell grumbling on his shoulders.

"Thanks, man." Utarz said from below. "I owe you one."

Tracer looked at him. "You're welcome, I-" He suddenly noticed a purple flaming wreckage. "Huh? What the fuck did you do to the Ghost?!"

"Ah." Utarz chuckled nervously. "About thatâ€¦"

Miara put down the gun as she saw Tracer march up to Utarz. She'd seen everything she needed to see and as much as she wanted to see

Utarz's pain, someone had to report to Atar.

* * *

><p>"I seeâ€|" Atar said to the Kig-Yar on the computer screen.
"Isn't that a bit too soon?"<p>

"Not my decision, dude." The Kig-Yar said. "What the Prophets say will happen **will **happen."

"I know, but stillâ€|"

"Chill man. I'm sure it'll be fine."

Atar had made several requests to get a different radio operative to respond to the 800 Squad's calls but they always got this incompetent idiot. Atar disliked him particularly because of his attitude and the way he got things done, which was over a long period of time and procrastination.

"If you say soâ€|" Atar said. "Thank you for yourâ€|" help."

"No prob-" Atar hung up.

Atar then sent another email that read 'SERIOUSLY, GET ME A DIFFERENT RADIO OPERATIVE'. He felt that should get the point across.

Miara entered the room. Atar noticed and turned around.

"Well?" He asked. "Is Repora contained?"

"For now sir." Miara responded.

Atar grunted. "Well, that'll have to do. Tell everyone that the recruit's arriving in ten minutes."

"Yes si- TEN MINUTES?!"

"Yup. We can't tidy up like we planned." Atar grumbled. "But we did our best, didn't we?"

Everyone hurried to the drop point, which was just a metal circle with the words 'Land here please', to wait for the 800 Squad's newest recruit.

* * *

><p>Author's notes

Well, ending was pretty crap, but I feel like this version of Marines vs Elites will actually go somewhere. Speaking of which, I don't intend to revisit the Marines. I didn't feel as if I would be able to continue with them. I mean, the Elites are better.

Thanks for watching.

Potato.

2. The NVP Tour

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* * *

><p>The Sangheili 800 Squad

****Chapter 1: The NVP Tour****

* * *

><p>February, 2550 (Human Calender)

****1131 hours****

****SSMB 800****

* * *

><p>"Soâ€|" Utarz said, trying to break the silence. "When's the rookie getting here?"<p>

"Give it a few more minutes." Miara said.

"Oooooooooooooooooo, I can't stand the suspense!" Repora said gleefully. "What will the new guy be like?"

POOF

"Maybe he'll be the intellectual sort." Heaven suggested. "The Forerunners know we could use someone like that."

POOF

"Maybe he'll like chaos and death!" Hell giggled. "We need more of those people, we don't have enough!"

"Actually," Heaven countered. "Repora counts as ten Sangheili in that regard, so we do have enough of those people."

"Ah, fuck you Heaven."

"Well, screw you Hell."

"Hey, what"

"Oi!" Repora snapped. "Stop arguing you two! I didn't raise you like this!"

Utarz and Miara looked at Repora strangely. Tracer and Atar completely ignored him and talked to each other.

"Do we know anything about the recruit?" Tracer asked.

"Not really." Atar replied. "The most we know about him is his name and military career."

"What's his name?"

"Zen. Zen 'Yurod."

Tracer pulled out a clipboard and a stylus. "Nameâ€| Zenâ€| 'Yurodâ€|" He said, writing down his name.

"Awwwww." Utarz grumbled. "I wanted a female arriving here."

Miara sighed. "Utarz, what female would join the army and then sleep with you?"

"For your information, I am very good at that sort of stuff. I once got a nun into bed **after **she had taken her vows."

"â€|Every single day you find new ways to disgust me."

"And what's his military career?" Tracer asked.

"He doesn't have one." Atar replied. "He's a fresh recruit."

"Priorâ€| militaryâ€|" Tracer wrote. "Experienceâ€| none. Rankâ€| Minor."

"So he failed all three tests on his first go?" Miara asked.

"Affirmative." Atar confirmed. "He demonstrated complete lack of skill in all three areas, but afterwards, when he was told that he was coming here, he kept saying that the test was rigged."

"Rigged?" Tracer looked up in surprise. "What kind of Sangheili would rig a military test?"

"I would." Utarz said.

"Yeah, but you've been stuck here for several years and you don't have any friends, so it couldn't have been you."

"â€|Aren't you guys my friends?"

Everyone stared at him.

"Yeeeeeeeeeeeeaaaaaaaaaaaaahhhhhhhhhâ€|" Repora said. "No."

"â€|I hate you all."

"Oh, here he comes!" Miara said, pointing up.

"Standby for recruit!" Atar ordered.

Everyone stood at attention and watched as the drop ship started to appear from the sky.

* * *

><p>A dark green Sangheili Minor sighed as he saw the landing pad grow closer.<p>

He knew that the test was rigged. He wasn't saying that the Prophets had ordered it so but he was certain that his poor performance was due to rigging.

Maybe his water was drugged. He'd certainly felt odd on the moment of the test and everything was swimming before his eyes. Or perhaps the weapons had been purposely faulty. After all, his rifle had jammed multiple times.

Above all, he felt that the questions in the test were completely unfair. How was he supposed to know who the eightysecond general in the whole of history was?

He had tried to tell everybody, but they took his words with a grain of salt. They believed him to be a sore loser. His parents had disowned him the moment they heard he was going to the 800 Squad, so he couldn't talk to them about his beliefs.

Eventually, he just gave up. No one believed him, so what was the point of trying to convince them?

He didn't know much about the 800 Squad, other than it was the reject pile. He didn't know anything about the Sangheili who occupied the base. He expected morons, but other than thatâ€¦

Well, he was about to find out.

The Phantom landed on the landing pad, the doors opening. He was greeted with the sight of a Sangheili General in maroon/orange General Armour, a purple Spec Ops Sangheili, a blue Sangheili Minor, a (to his surprise) female, yellow Sangheili Minor and a white Ranger with inscrutable features.

It was truly an odd bunch of soldiers.

Zen stepped out of the Phantom and looked at the soldiers. The Phantom's doors closed and the ship left.

_So this is it. _Zen thought. _I'm stuck here._

"Welcome!" The General said. "I assume that you are Zen?"

"Yes sir." Zen replied. Then he asked, "Pardon me for asking, but how come someone of your rank is in the 800 Squad?"

"Don't ask, don't tell." The General replied. "I'm General Atar, leader of the Sangheili 800 Squad. I believe that introductions are in order."

"That would be nice, sir."

Atar gestured to the Spec Ops Sangheili. "This is Trac 'Eros, our Technician and Field Medic. He would prefer it if you called him Tracer, though."

"Pleasure to meet you." Tracer said politely.

"Same here." Zen lied. "May I ask, isn't a Field Medic the same thing as a doctor?" Doctors were held in low regard on Sangheilos.

"Nope." Tracer replied. "Doctors cut other people up. Field Medics apply medicine and kill the suffering."

Atar then gestured to the female Minor. "This is Miara, our Pyrotechnics Expert and quite possibly the only female Sangheili soldier in the whole Covenant."

"Hello!" Miara piped cheerfully.

Zen looked at her. "Pyrotechnics? That's a thing in the Covenant?"

"Well, no." Miara admitted. "I'm the only one who practises it."

"Sounds interesting."

Atar gestured to the blue Minor. "This is Utarz, the squad's local jackass."

"Hey!" Utarz snapped.

Zen looked at him. "You know, you should be more polite to your commanding officer."

"Fuck that." Utarz grumbled. "He's never polite to me."

"Except he has the right to be impolite to you."

"Yeah? Says who?"

"Says command." Zen said, already getting frustrated.

"Yeah? Well command can su-"

"MOVING ON." Atar said suddenly. He pointed to the Ranger. "This is Repora, our Demolitions Expert."

"Hello!" Repora said cheerfully.

Zen looked uncertainly at him. "Reporaâ€¦ I've seen your name in the news."

"Oh, thanks!"

"That wasn't a compliment. You murdered twenty-five civilians."

Repora chuckled. "I remember that. Man, that was fun."

"â€¦Okayâ€¦" Atar muttered. "Something else to be terrified of." He cleared his throat. "Anyway, Tracer will give you a tour of the base. Won't you, Tracer?"

"Yup." Tracer gestured to Zen. "Follow me."

Zen nodded and walked over to him.

"Make sure the new guy stays away from my room." Utarz told

Tracer.

Zen looked at Utarz. "Why would I want to go into your room?"

"I dunno. Just stay out of it, I've got some good shit in there."

"I doubt that." Tracer said. "Let's go."

As Tracer and Zen walked away, Utarz glared at the green form. "Atar, I think the new guy's a dick."

Atar closed his eyes, then opened them and faced Utarz. "For the last time, you address me as either general, or sir."

"Fuck that, you always call me Utarz."

"I am in a position of power. You are not."

"You know," Repora commented. "It's always nice to meet someone who remembers you for who you are."

* * *

><p>Zen had already decided that he didn't like Utarz.<p>

"What is that guy's problem?" He muttered.

"We don't know." Tracer sighed. "We're planning to get him tested for brain damage."

Zen looked at the impending base before him, although it looked more like a ruin to him. "Is this the base?"

"Yup."

Zen was silent. Tracer chuckled. "I know what you're thinking. You see, we've been trying to repair the base for some time now, but since Repora's arrival, he's been unravelling most of our hard work. We still press on though."

"How do you guys live here?" Zen asked.

"We turn the heaters onto maximum and move a lot outside during winter."

"And during summer?"

"Same, except without the heaters."

"Uh, huh."

"Follow me. I'll run you through the important things."

* * *

><p>"This is the courtyard." Tracer said. "We have assembly here."<p>

"Assembly?"

"In case of emergencies."

"Ah."

* * *

><p>"This is the vehicle depot." Tracer said. "Here, we keep all vehicles that we've built or captured."<p>

Zen looked around. "Doesn't look like there's many vehicles."

"Well, we have some. There's Utarz's Ghost, the squad Phantomâ€| and that's it."

"We seriously only have two vehicles?"

"I'm in the process of building a Wraithâ€| but it keeps getting blown up." Tracer grumbled.

* * *

><p>"This is Atar's office." Tracer said, showing Zen a small room with a metal desk and a large computer screen.<p>

"Huh." Zen looked around. "Neat."

"This room has a large amount of history. You see, we're pretty sure this is where the previous owner of the base died." Tracer pointed to a dusty Sangheili skeleton.

"GAH!" Zen jumped when he saw the skeleton. "How come I didn't see that?!"

"Dunno. It's easy to miss for some reason."

"Why is it still here?! You guys should get rid of it!"

"We would, but he's stuck to the wall." Tracer pointed to some heating pipes where the skeleton's arms were lodged firmly. "We believe that some Brutes killed him."

* * *

><p>"This is the weaponry room." Tracer pointed to a room with hooks on the walls.<p>

"It's empty." Zen pointed out.

"We don't get many supply drops."

* * *

><p>"This is the kitchen." Tracer said, gesturing to the room. "Utarz makes the food here, although we don't get much to work with."<p>

Zen blinked. "Wait, why does Utarz make the food?"

"Looks and attitude may hide it, but Utarz is actually an excellent cook." Tracer explained. "We think it's the Forerunner's way of

compensating."

* * *

><p>"This is the training grounds." Tracer pointed to a large area. "We have an obstacle course, a shooting ground and a fake base."<p>

"Wow!" Zen was impressed. "This is actually pretty cool."

"Yeah, but we don't use it very often." Tracer admitted. "Atar gets tired of constant failure."

"â€|Oh. That sucks."

"Eh. We consider ourselves lucky."

* * *

><p>"Up there is the sentry box." Tracer said, pointing up to a large tower. "It's pretty pointless because we don't get attacked. Ever."<p>

"Then why is it here?" Zen asked.

"Atar insisted."

* * *

><p>"This is the malfunctioning door." Tracer pointed to a metal door that looked perfectly fine. "We're pretty sure that Repora did something to it."<p>

Confused, Zen approached the door. "Looks normal to me."

"That is a deception." Tracer replied seriously. "Don't open it. EVER."

* * *

><p>"This is the bomb shelter." Tracer said. "We flee here if we're getting bombed by someone or something."<p>

Zen said, "We're the reject pile. No-one has any reason to bomb us."

"You'd be surprised." Tracer replied. "Let's move on."

* * *

><p>Zen looked at a blue door to his right. "What's in there?"<p>

Tracer blinked. "Oh, that'sâ€| that's Utarz's room."

"Oh. Let's leave."

* * *

><p>"This is the power room." Tracer pointed to a large plasma

battery. "This thing powers the whole base."<p>

"How come we had to go through about forty locks?" Zen asked.

"Repورا got in here a few months ago. All the lights in the base exploded."

"How-?"

"We don't know. But we've decided that we can no longer take any chances with him."

* * *

><p>"This is the garbage disposal bay." Tracer pointed to a dusty, smelly area with several garbage bags around. "Here, we dump all of our unwanted crap so it can be collected and thrown into space."<p>

"What throws it into space?" Zen asked.

"Our Phantom."

"So the Engineers don't do it for you?"

"We don't have Engineers."

"You're kidding me!" Zen said incredulously. "Everyone has at least one Engineer!"

"Yeah, getting Engineers is a privilege. We aren't known for getting privileges."

"Wowâ€|" Zen was amazed. "You guys really do suck."

"Yup."

* * *

><p>"This is the armoury." Tracer pointed to a large room. "We keep our extra armour in here.<p>

"Why do you need extra armour if you never get into battles?" Zen asked.

"Really? We just keep them in case the armour we currently have gets dirty or something."

* * *

><p>"And this is your room." Trace pointed inside a spacious room with some weapon racks and a floating bed.<p>

Zen blinked. "Wait, really?"

"Yup. All personnel get a whole bedroom to themselves. It's easy to organise, since we only have five soldiers here. Well," Tracer looked at Zen. "Six, now."

"Okay, so that's pretty coolâ€|" Zen mused.

"And now for some basic safety instructions." Tracer said.

"I think I can figure out what to and not to do."

Ignoring him, Tracer said, "First rule: When Atar asks you to do a 'favour', immediately blow it off, as the favour will usually be very, if not extremely, dangerous. Rule two: If you damage or destroy a vehicle, I withhold the right to murder you in any way I see fit. Rule three: Avoid Miara when she's angry, as this means that she will set fire to the first thing she sees.

"Rule four: If you are going to beat up or generally annoy Utarz, make sure that you have a passable reason for why you're doing it. Rule five: If you hear Repora scream Utarz's name, then immediately head to the bomb shelter because he will start firing random fuel rods everywhere. Any questions?"

Zen stared at Tracer, in a complete loss of what to say. Finally, he managed, "Umâ€| does that sort of stuff usually happen?"

"Every. Fucking. **Day.**" Tracer growled.

* * *

><p>After Tracer had gone off to show Zen the base, everyone else had gone off to do their own thing.<p>

Utarz, however, took a while to decide what to do.

First, he decided to go pester Repora. He had accidentally made a joke that normally would've encouraged Repora to kill him. Instead, Repora just shrugged it off, put his arm around Utarz's shoulders and then went into great detail about his previous crimes, all the while talking in a pleasant and casual tone.

Utarz had thrown up for about five minutes afterwards.

Deciding to stay the hell away from Repora after that, Utarz went into the kitchen to drink, but found that Atar had gotten rid of all his alcohol. Again. So getting wasted wasn't an option.

After some thought, Utarz decided to pursue and issue that had been troubling him for a while. So he went to Miara.

It took him a while to find her and when he did, she gave him an unfriendly glare. This was nothing new. She had detested him ever since he had made it clear that he didn't care for honour or the glory of the Covenant.

He had pretended to share that dislike, but she was still his younger sister, so he still cared for her. He saw it as his duty to make sure that she made the right decisions in her life.

Hypocritical, yes. But he felt that he had to do it, no matter what.

"What do **you **want?" Miara asked coldly.

"I want to know what exactly you think of Tracer." Utarz replied.

One of those decisions he wanted to make sure she did right was who she spent her life with.

"Oh, for the sake of the Forerunners," Miara snapped. "We've been over this!"

"Yeah, and I'm not happy with the responses you've given me!" Utarz snapped back. "I mean, what the hell sort of answer is, 'none of your business?'"

"A truthful answer! What I do with my life is my responsibility, not yours!"

"Like it or not, I am your older brother so it's my j--"

Miara glared at him. "Your 'what'?"

Utarz choose his next words with care. "It's my right to know what your thoughts are."

"Bull."

"Hey, it's true!"

"Fine. You really want to know what I think of Tracer?"

"Yes."

"I think that he is a nice guy who I would sleep with just to piss you off."

Utarz growled. "Not if I have anything to say about that."

"You **don't.**"

"Umâ€| yeah, I don'tâ€| uhâ€| that's actually a good point."

"Why do you care, anyway?" Miara asked. "It wouldn't affect your life."

Utarz thought quickly. He didn't want Miara to think that he cared for her. She detested him, so it wouldn't be good for his health.

Thankfully, it was easy for him to come up with an excuse.

"Yes, it would." Utarz replied. "I don't want Tracer as my brother-in-law. I don't need him nerding up my life. And I'm pretty sure that Tracer wouldn't want me as an in-law either."

He had her there. Miara loathed being Utarz's brother, so she could accurately guess what someone else would feel like if they were Utarz's in-law.

"Iâ€| wellâ€|"

"Exactly!" Utarz pressed his point. "Besides, what could he possibly

do for you? He's a nerd! On top of that, he's a doctor! You'd be-

"Medic." Said a voice from behind him.

"Whatever!" Utarz replied. "Doctor, medic, what's th-" Utarz froze when he realised who had spoken.

"Not a doctor," Tracer continued, glaring at Utarz. "A medic. There's a difference. A slight difference, but a difference nonetheless."

Utarz looked at him. "Hey dude, do you mind? I'm talking to Miara here."

"Yeah, and now I want to talk to her. So, could you leave, please?"

"You're not the boss of me!"

"I have a higher rank."

"That's bull. Your armour was taken off of a dead guy."

"Fine, then I'll just call Repora."

"Fine. I'll go." Utarz turned and left, muttering under his breath, "Asshole"

Tracer watched him go, and then turned to Miara. "You sure you're related to him?"

Miara chuckled. "Yeah, we took a blood test."

"That's unfortunate."

"Yeah" Aren't you meant to be giving Zen a tour?"

"Just finished. He's probably unpacking in his room."

"Unpacking? He didn't bring any luggage."

"Oh. Right."

"So" what now?"

"Dunno" that's up to Atar."

An awkward silence fell between them.

"I'm going to tell Atar that I'm finished." Tracer said, walking off.

"Sure." Miara said, looking at him leave.

When he was out of sight, she sighed.

She truly liked him, but she wasn't sure if he was the male she wanted to spend her life with yet. True, he was smart and resourceful, but he also lacked physical strength and a good aim with

firearms. Plus, she was pretty sure that Tracer didn't want to be related to Utarz in any way.

It was annoying to say the least. All these things she wanted to tell him and she couldn't.

Another really inconvenient fact was that there weren't any other males she could choose. Due to her placement in the 800 Squad, males who weren't wouldn't agree to marriage with her. So her only choices lay within the 800 Squad.

Utarz was her brother, so that wasn't an option and she was pretty sure that Atar was already married, so he was out of the question as well. So the only non-married males in the Squad were Tracer and Repora.

So basically, her only choice was Tracer.

The new guy opened up a new vista thoughâ€¦ but she didn't know anything about him yet. Perhaps she could ask him some questions later.

* * *

><p>Atar would've frowned at his monitor if he could've. According to Zen's profile, he had been part of a very successful military family. Nothing to suggest that he had the potential to be thrown into the reject pile.<p>

In fact, his profile actually said that he had trained for years to get into the army. All the evidence pointed to Zen not belonging here.

Tracer entered the room. "Sir?"

Atar turned and looked at him. "Finished giving Zen the tour?"

"Yup. He's in his room now. Dunno what he's doing, though."

"Well, whatever he's doing he's gonna have to stop. I'm organising a training exercise."

Tracer blinked. "Huh? But why?"

"I have my reasons."

"â€¦Okay sir. Do you want me to tell everyone else?"

"Negative." Atar turned to the intercom mic and turned it on.

"To all troops under the 800 Squad." Atar's voice echoed through the base. "I have decided to hold a simple training regimen on the training grounds today. I expect you all to be there within fifteen minutes. Thank you."

In his room, Zen looked up curiously. Didn't Tracer say that Atar didn't like the training sessions?

In the courtyard, Miara frowned at her flamethrower. She had been experiencing some technical difficulties with it lately and wasn't

keen on letting anyone know.

In the kitchen, Utarz groaned. He hated training sessions. They were ****boring ****and always ended the same way.

At the door leading to the power room, Repora giggled happily. Finally, an excuse to kill Utarz with the new guy around!

In his office, Atar looked at Tracer and said, "You better get moving. The time limit includes you as well."

3. Training Round

****The Halo Universe belongs to Microsoft Studios and 343 Industries. But these characters are my own creation and cannot be used without my permission. If you do use them without my permission, then Tracer will disable your internet and ban you from Xbox Live. Enjoy the show.****

* * *

<p>The Sangheili 800 Squad

****Chapter 2: Training Round****

* * *

<p>February, 2550 (Human Calender)

****1213 hours****

****SSMB 800****

* * *

<p>The Sangheili 800 Squad's training grounds weren't actually above ground. Rather, they were in a cave for protection against the wind and ice.<p>

It was split into three, smaller caverns which each held a different purpose. The smallest cavern held the firing range, where large targets were put up in the hopes of getting the soldiers to actually hit something. The longest cavern held the obstacle course, which Atar built himself. It was ridiculously complicated for such poor soldiers.

The largest cavern held what Repora, and the others once it had caught on, called 'the Map.' It was a complex of buildings that held military significance. Of course, they were all fake, but they were so realistic that one was easily fooled into thinking otherwise.

The largest building, right in the middle, served as a watchtower. Atar would stand in there during training, at the very top, so he could see what was going on at all times.

The base simulation was, however, way too big for six Sangheili. Rather, it was designed for battalions rather than teams.

"Alright men!" Atar snapped once everyone had gathered around.

"Today, we will be doing a simple exercise: a game of capture the flag! You will be split into two teams. One will be defending the flag and the other will be trying to take the flag back to their base! I will decide what teams you will be split into and where your respective bases will be. Any questions?"

"Yeah," Zen said. "Why is this place called 'the Map'?"

"Honestly? We don't know." Atar replied. "Repora just started calling it that and it just caught on. Any more questions?"

"Why are we doing this?" Utarz asked.

"Shut up."

"Who'll be on what teams?" Tracer asked.

Atar thought about this. "Well Tracer, you and Zen will be the attacking team and Miara and Repora will be the defending team."

"Wait, Repora's going to be defending?!"

"Yay!" Repora said happily. "Although I prefer to be attacking in these sessions."

"Well, we are low on soldiers, Tracer." Atar said defensively.

"Why don't we just use Utarz, sir?" Zen asked.

"I've actually given up on training Utarz to be a soldier." Atar sighed. "So instead, he'll watch the session from the tower under my supervision."

"It's not as good as it sounds." Utarz muttered.

"Yeah, you're not on the ground where I can kill you." Repora sighed.

"Speaking of killing others, we don't have any training weapons." Atar added. "So the weapons we have will be the ones we use."

"What?!" Zen exclaimed. "They didn't have training weapons?!"

"Sir? Zen doesn't have a weapon yet." Miara pointed out.

Now that she mentioned it, Zen realised that everyone was holding a Covenant weapon. Atar had a Concussion Rifle, Utarz had a standard Plasma Rifle, Tracer had a Carbine, Repora had a Fuel Rod Gun and Miara had a human-made flamethrower. Zen was currently holding nothing.

"Oh yeah." Atar looked at Zen. "He needs a weapon. But we don't have much."

"What about that Needle Rifle?" Tracer suggested.

"Yeah!" Miara agreed. "I mean, it's functional and no-one ever uses it."

"Except that day when Repora tried to use long-range guns." Utarz added.

"That was the least damaging rampage I ever went on." Repora said.

"Very well then." Atar nodded and turned to Utarz. "Go get that Needle Rifle."

"Me? Why me?" Utarz asked.

"Because otherwise, you'll be doing jack shit! Now get a move on!"

Utarz grumbled and walked off. He was in no hurry.

About thirty boring minutes later, Utarz came back.

"What took you so long?" Atar snapped.

"I was conserving energy." Utarz replied. He gave the rifle to Zen. "Here's your stupid rifle."

Zen took it from him, glaring at Utarz as he walked back into place.

With that problem out of the way, Atar said, "Right! Now that we've solved that rather minor problem, let's decide what will happen. Attacking team, your base will be the science lab. Defending team, your base will be the grocery store. Move out!"

"Where's the science lab?" Zen asked.

"Follow me." Tracer said. Zen did.

When they reached the science lab, Tracer explained what was going to happen. "When you hear an alarm go off, that's our signal to start moving. Once that happens, we'll need to sneak around the back of the grocery store."

"Won't they be prepared for that?"

Tracer blinked and cursed. "Shit, they will. Alright then, we'll take the sewer system. They won't expect an attack from below."

"This place even has a sewer system?" Zen said in amazement. "Who built this place?"

"I did."

"You did?!"

"Yeah, during the time when it was just me, Miara and Atar. Once you get the power back on, the base takes care of itself."

Zen was lost for words. What was this guy doing in the 800 Squad?

An alarm blared. Tracer straightened up. "Let's go."

Zen nodded. They both went out of the door and to the nearest manhole.

* * *

><p>"Utarz, where are Tracer and Zen right now?" Atar asked.<p>

Utarz looked at a map of the Map and looked for two yellow, glowing dots near the science lab. He found them and said, "They're entering the sewers."

"What about Miara and Repora?"

"They're just standing there."

Atar brought up a Beam Rifle. The thing was actually damaged so that it couldn't shoot, so Atar just used it in place of binoculars. He focused on the grocery store and zoomed in. Miara and Repora seemed to be talking, although Miara's body language suggested that she didn't find the conversation to her liking.

Atar lowered the rifle. "So Tracer and Zen are trying to attack via the sewers."

"Hasn't Tracer tried that plan already?"

"That was when he was paired up with Repora. So it failed. This time, he has that Zen personâ€|"

Utarz snorted. "What's so great about that Zen guy?"

"His records suggest that he's a competent soldier."

Utarz glared at Atar. He didn't know what it was, but Zen irked him for some reason. "Atar, maybe if-"

"General or sir!" Atar snapped.

"Whatever. Maybe if you weren't so old and senile, then you would know that he belongs here."

In response to this, Atar punched him in the face.

* * *

><p>Tracer and Zen reached a fork in the sewers. There were two bends in the sewers, meaning that there were two ways to go.<p>

Tracer looked at Zen. "A strategic option would be to split up. Two ways to go might give us an advantage."

"Agreed." Zen nodded.

They both turned and went the other way. Tracer was thinking of a battle plan. If he went undetected, he could just sneak around and grab the flag. If he was discovered, then he would have to knock out his discoverer and then continue to the flag.

He reached a ladder that reached to above ground. He climbed up and

looked around. So far, nothing. This was good.

He climbed out of the sewers and brushed off some fake sewage. He ducked into a street and looked at his motion detector. No-one about. He looked at his map. The grocery store was about four cycles away in Direction X (About 80 metres away to the South). He could use the streets to avoid detection.

And that's what he did. He crept along the streets, all the while looking at his motion detector and map in an attempt to avoid confrontation with anyone. Especially Repora.

Suddenly, a little red dot showed up on his motion detector and he froze. That was definitely not Zen. He couldn't be here already.

Which meant that the dot was either Miara or Repora. Neither were ideal sparring companions.

Tracer gulped and held up his Carbine. He waited for the red dot to come close to where he was and then he spun around and said, "Freeze!"

It was Miara who was around the corner. She jumped and held up her flame thrower.

They stood there, staring at each other for about ten seconds. Each one was pointing their weapon at the other.

Then Tracer cracked, shouted, "NEVER MIND!" and ran off.

Miara lowered her flame thrower and sighed. This happened every single timeâ€¦

* * *

><p>Zen had barely crawled out of the sewers when he saw a red dot appear on his motion detector.<p>

He immediately scrambled back in, wanting to avoid whoever it was who was coming near his position. He waited, staying perfectly still as footsteps walked over the manhole he was hiding under.

When the red dot passed by, Zen crawled out of the sewers and looked around, rifle at the ready. He looked at his map. He was close to the grocery store. He could just sneak by and grab the flag.

Zen crept along, eventually reaching the grocery store. The flag was just standing there, no-one guarding it at all. Sloppy.

Zen approached the flag and looked around, just to check. Then he grabbed the flag and took off back towards the sewer.

He almost ran into Repora, who was just standing there.

"Hello!" Repora said cheerfully. "I need that back."

Zen smashed the flag into Repora's head. Repora stumbled back and Zen dashed forward to the manhole. He quickly opened it up and jumped inside. Repora started to follow, so Zen quickly dropped the flag and

got out his Needle Rifle. He aimed up and just as Repora's helmet showed, Zen fired at an angle to the wall.

Zen then dashed off. Since he fired at an angle, the needle would reflect off the wall and hit the wall. It was only one needle, so Repora's energy shield would survive the hit. The needle would only disorient him and give Zen time to get back to base.

He didn't notice Repora collapse with a hole in his helmet.

POOF

"Oh dearâ€|" Heaven muttered.

"Well, that's a shame." Hell said sarcastically.

* * *

><p>"What the hell?" Utarz muttered.<p>

"What?" Atar asked.

"It's Zen." Utarz pointed to the map. "He's got the flag!"

"He's what?!"

"He's got the flag and he's heading back to his base!"

Atar rushed to the map to see for himself. Sure enough, the red dot that belonged to Zen and the blue dot that belonged to the flag were heading back to the science lab.

This had never happened before. During training sessions, the flag either got accidentally destroyed, or everyone got lost. No-one had actually won in the training sessions.

It was a sad fact of their reality that this was effectively a breakthrough.

"Anything else?" Atar asked.

"Oh, he shot Repora in the head."

"Good."

* * *

><p>Tracer wasn't lost yet, so that was a good thing.<p>

He looked out onto the street. Miara was there, turning everywhere with her flamethrower. Right now, Tracer had climbed up on top of a building and was looking everywhere. Stuff like this usually happened during training sessions.

Quite frankly, Tracer was really annoyed that he lost his nerve again. This didn't used to happen when Utarz was in the training sessions. Tracer would just punch his face and walk on. In fact, everyone used to do that.

_Just shoot her in a non-lethal area. _Tracer told himself, turning around and aiming at her. _Like the leg. Legs can heal. Slowly, easy does itâ€|_

Fifteen seconds of aiming later, he fired and missed her by several metres.

Miara stared at the point where the round hit the wall, then to where the shot came from. She then shouted, "That was an ****awful**** shot!"

"Hey, don't judge me!" Tracer shouted back. "I'm a reject!"

"I'm a reject as well, and even I can't shoot that bad!"

"Iâ€| wellâ€|" Tracer began.

The horn sounded, followed by Atar's voice. "The attacking team has won!"

Both Tracer and Miara blinked.

"Waitâ€|" Tracer slowly, coming to terms with what Atar just said. "What?"

Both Miara and Tracer went to the science lab, where Zen was standing, waiting for them.

"What?" Zen asked in response to their stares.

"You actually managed to get the flag." Miara said in shock.

"â€|Yesâ€|" Zen said uncertainly. "That was the goal."

"We know, butâ€|" Tracer wasn't sure how to explain this to Zen. "That's never happened before."

"What do you mean?" Zen asked.

"Wellâ€| we usually lose our nerve, accidentally break stuff, run out of time, etcetera*â€|"

Zen stared at him.

"We know." Miara said. "We're not that good."

Atar's voice sounded over the intercom again. "Tracer! Please help me and Utarz take Repora to the medical bay. He has a bullet wound in his head."

Zen double blinked. "Wait, what?!"

Tracer sped off. Miara looked at Zen suspiciously. "What did you do?"

"Iâ€| I shot him." Zen stuttered. "But I assumed his energy shielding would hold up!"

"We don't have energy shielding." Miara replied.

This statement took a few seconds for Zen to comprehend.

"You don't have energy shielding?!" He exploded. "You don't have the most basic piece of equipment that every Sangheili soldier has?!"

"You have a lot to learn about our squad." Miara commented.

* * *

><p>February, 2550 (Human Calender)

1224 hours

SSMB 800

* * *

><p>Tracer exited the medical bay, taking off the eyepieces he was wearing. Everyone minus Repora was standing there, waiting for the news.<p>

"I've got bad news." Tracer said sadly. "He's going to live."

At this, everyone except Zen swore and complained loudly. Zen double blinked again.

"What?! But I shot him in the head without energy shielding!"

"Yup." Tracer said bitterly. "That's what the x-ray showed as well."

"Then how-?"

"Dunno. But he was talking to me during the whole operation, so he must be alive."

"Can I come out now?" Repora's voice floated in from the medical bay.

"Yeah, I don't see why not."

Repora strolled out of the room and said cheerfully, "Hello! You're a good shot!" He said to Zen.

"I don't believe this." Zen said disbelievingly. "You just cheated the demons of hell."

"Yup!" Repora chuckled. "Suckers. They won't be getting me yet! Not in this chapter!"

"Chapter?"

Utarz explained. "Repora is convinced that he can see the 'real world' through theâ€|" He looked at Repora. "What was it, fifth wall?"

"Fourth wall, you dumbarse." Repora replied, annoyed.

"That is irrelevant." Atar butted in. "What I find fascinating is how well Zen performed in that test."

"That wasn't really anything special, sir." Zen said, trying to be modest. "A million other troops could do that."

"Exactly." Atar looked at Zen. "Competent soldiers can do what you just did. Not us."

"Wellâ€¦" Zen looked at them all. "You can't seriously be telling me that you guys can't do that."

"We're in the reject pile for a reason." Tracer said. "We suck. More than any other troop in the Covenant."

"More than the Grunts." Miara added.

Utarz nodded. "Most of us can't aim for shit."

"And our strategies are poor at best." Atar added.

"And most of our equipment is broken." Repora chimed in.

"Courtesy of **you, **by the way." Tracer said irritably.

If Zen could've frowned, he would've. These guys seemed like a negative bunch of Sangheili.

"Well, thenâ€¦ if you guys suck so much, then why am I here?" Zen asked.

"That's my point." Atar said. "Why are you here?"

"Maybe command made a mistake somehow." Miara said.

"No." Atar seemed to be realising something. "If you failed all three tests, yet pulled off what any normal soldier can do, then I think it's much more likely that your test was rigged."

A feeling of elation and annoyance filled Zen. "That's what I've been telling everyone this entire time!"

"Who'd do that?" Utarz asked.

"Dunno." Atar said. "But I've recorded the training session, so I'll show it to command to show them their mistake."

"And then what?" Miara asked. "Will he get sent to another squad?"

"But he can't!" Repora protested. "He's part of the main cast now! He can't leave at the beginning!"

Everyone ignored him.

"Zen, follow me." Atar ordered. "We're going to talk to command."

Zen nodded and followed Atar out of the room. Hopefully now, he'd get the chance to go to a regular squad and fight the humans.

That left Tracer, Utarz, Miara and Repora in the room.

Utarz looked at Tracer. He decided that if he was going to say something to him, then he would do it now.

"Hey, could I talk to Tracer alone for a minute?" He asked the room at large.

"Huh?" Tracer asked.

"Okay!" Repora walked out of the room. "I have bombs to make, anyway."

Miara was a bit more stubborn. "Why?" She asked.

"Just because." Utarz shot back. "Why don't you go talk to mom and dad?"

Miara grumbled, but went off to do just that. She hadn't spoken to her parents lately and she reckoned she owed them a call.

Now, it was just Tracer and Utarz in the room. Utarz glared at Tracer, who looked back uncertainly.

"Can I help you?" Tracer asked.

"Yeah, you can." Utarz said simply. "I'm only going to say this once: stay away from my sister."

Tracer double blinked. "What?" He shook his head. "Can you say that again? I don't think I heard that correctly."

"Oh, you heard me correctly." Utarz said. "Stay the fuck away from my sister!"

"Right." Tracer glared back. "Why?"

"Simple. I don't want anything growing up between you and Miara. She's not gonna marry a doctor."

Annoyed now, Tracer snapped, "First of all, I'm a **field medic. **Secondly, what's it to you?"

"None of your business!"

"Neither is this." Tracer glared at Utarz. "Miara is free to make her own decisions."

"Yeah? Well how about you make a decision and make sure that nothing stirs up!"

"You have had two years to discuss this." Tracer said. "Why bring it up now?"

"Justâ€¦ because!"

"Right." Tracer folded his arms. "Why would I heed your request?"

"Because if you don'tâ€¦" Utarz raised his Plasma Rifle threateningly.

Tracer rolled his eyes. "Utarz, I've seen you shoot before. You couldn't hit a Phantom if it was right in front of you."

"I don't have to shoot you just to give a message." Utarz hissed. "This thing doubles as a pretty hard club."

Tracer tapped the Plasma Rifle.

It fell to pieces.

"It would double as a club," Tracer pointed out. "If you took the time to learn maintenance."

Utarz picked up the pieces in his arms and glared at Tracer. "Seriously dudeâ€¦ I'm warning youâ€¦ stay away from Miara."

And then he stormed off.

Tracer sighed and went back into the medical bay to pack everything away. "Stay away from Miara." He repeated. "If he thinks of himself as the big man, then he must not have gotten past the written test."

* * *

><p>"Atar, my man!" The Kig-Yar said dazedly. "What's up?"<p>

"I see that they still haven't replaced you." Atar grumbled. "Can I speak to someone worth speaking to?"

The Kig-Yar looked at his screen. "Well, there's a Brute free on this other channel. Wanna chat with him?"

"No." Atar said bluntly. "No I do not."

"So what's up, man?"

"I believe that command has made a mistake in sending Zen here." Atar said, pointing to Zen.

Zen was usually okay with most Kig-Yar, but there was something about this one that immediately lowered his respect for him.

It was probably the stupid way of talking. It would set anyone on edge.

"A mistake?" The Kig-Yar said. "Naw, command doesn't make no mistakes."

"Trust me, they've made one." Atar said. "A big one."

"Can you, like, elaborato?"

"That's not a word." Zen pointed out.

"Zen is a competent soldier." Atar insisted. "He succeeded in our training program. No-one in our squad has ever done that

before."

"He failed all three tests, man." The Kig-Yar said lazily. "He belongs in your squad."

"I believe the tests were tampered with." Atar said. "I don't know by who or for what purpose, but I believe that they were set up to make sure that Zen was put into the 800 Squad."

"Yes!" Zen pitched in. "That's what I've been saying all along! Someone wanted me in this squad!"

"Command is gonna need a little proof, ya know." The Kig-Yar said.

"And I've got some." Atar said, sending the video file of the training match. "I think it'll be all the proof you'll need."

The Kig-Yar looked at the part of the screen where the file showed up. "Do you guys mind if I put you on hold for a mo?"

"Not at all." Atar lied.

"Groovy." The screen went temporarily blank.

"What an idiot." Zen commented.

"You don't know half of it." Atar said. "I believe that he takes too many drugs. I feel myself getting high just by looking at him."

They waited patiently for a while. Then they waited impatiently for a while. The video wasn't long, surely he would've looked at it by now.

Finally, the Kig-Yar's face showed up again.

"Well?" Atar grunted.

"No-can-do." The Kig-Yar said. "He has to stay there."

Atar blinked. "What?"

Zen double blinked, then exploded. "WHAT?!"

"But, you saw the footage!" Atar said.

"Yeah, but he still has to stay." The Kig-Yar repeated. "The Prophets ordered it. And you can't make a Prophet mad, y'know?"

"But I don't belong here!" Zen raged. "I'm a COMPETENT SOLDIER!"

"Sorry, man." The Kig-Yar sounded slightly sympathetic. "Orders are such a bummer, right?"

The screen turned off.

Zen shook with fury for a moment at the injustice, then stormed off with a cry of anger.

Atar just stood there, frowning. "Why would the Prophets want him here?" He wondered.

* * *

><p>In an old spaceship, a red Sangheili was monitoring the call. When it ended, he straightened up and turned to two shadows behind him, one large and one small.<p>

"They've figured it out sooner than I predicted." He said to the shadows. "While this shouldn't cause any major implications to the plan, we should still quicken our operations, just in case."

"But we don't even know where this guy is!" The smaller shadow said. It was high-pitched and squeaky. "We don't have access to the Covenant database, specifically the maps. How are we supposed to find one guy on a planet that we don't even know the location of?"

"I have a few ideas." The Sangheili replied. "It'd obviously be a planet of little to no value far away from the main battle front. And the Covenant only has three planets like that, so that narrows down our search."

The larger shadow spoke with a deep, slow voice. "And once we do find Zen, how do we make him listen to us? He is deep, religious Sangheili, just like the rest."

"I don't know." The Sangheili admitted. "But we have to make him listen. Zen is one of the most open-minded Sangheili I've ever known. We need people like him. We need to make him realise the truthâ€¦ even if it means forcing him to listen."

* * *

><p>Author's notes

****WELP, THERES A MYSTERY****

*****Or whatever the Sangheili equivalent of etcetera is.****

4. That Snow is a Spy!

****The Halo Universe belongs to Microsoft Studios and 343 Industries. But these characters are my own creation and cannot be used without my permission. If you do use them without my permission, then Utarz will steal all the money from your bank account. Enjoy the show.****

* * *

><p>The Sangheili 800 Squad

****Chapter 3: That Snow is a Spy!****

* * *

><p>For the first couple of days after command's refusal to get him out, Zen had taken to sitting in his room, fuming at the injustice. Atar had tried again and again to have Zen relocated to a better squad, but was having no luck.<p>

Mostly because he still had the same radio operator.

After a while though, Zen calmed down and decided that if he was going to be stuck here, then he might as well make himself useful. No sense in sulking like a child.

This was also the same day that Atar gave up trying to get Zen out. When the Kig-Yar didn't realise that being called a 'stubborn, dishonourable half-wit' was an insult, Atar decided that the Kig-Yar wasn't worth the time.

The first thing Zen tried to do was help rebuild the base. On that day, Miara had gone up to Zen and asked him if he had a girlfriend. He had been so taken aback by this question that he said 'yes' before realising that he actually didn't.

Miara didn't seem disappointed though. If anything she seemed satisfied, as though she had made a choice of some sort.

Zen quickly learnt that progress on the base was slow. The base was gigantic and was built for more than six people. Rebuilding a section of a wall more than six metres long didn't count as one twelfth of the reconstruction process. But Tracer was determined to bring the base back to its former glory.

Zen noticed that everyone carried their weapons wherever they went. When he asked why, Tracer explained that Atar was slightly paranoid and insisted on it.

Zen also learnt that only he, Tracer, Miara and Atar were actually doing anything. Utarz simply couldn't be bothered and Repora was doing 'something secret' in his room. What he was doing, Zen didn't really want to know.

Day three was relatively peaceful, despite the odd argument that would occasionally flare up between Tracer and Utarz, or Miara and Utarz, or, more commonly, Zen and Utarz. Zen had never met someone who was so lazy and dishonourable.

Everyone else seemed to be on edge though. Everyone kept away from Repora's room (which was sort of expected) and looking up at the sky as though they were worried it was going to fall on them. Utarz in particular kept reacting to loud noises and was riding on his Ghost (which Tracer had grudgingly repaired) the whole day.

Zen didn't really know what they were afraid of. The humans had no reason to attack them and they were isolated from anything else. No one would hurt them.

The next day, though, he learnt better.

* * *

><p>February, 2550 (Human Calender)

0925 Hours

SSMB 800

"That doesn't prove anything." Tracer said. "Hearing voices in your head is actually perfectly normal. It's when you start talking back to them that you should be worried."

"He does talk back to them." Atar pointed out.

"I know, but I just had to point that out. It's a common mistake."

"Where's Utarz?" Zen asked. He wasn't concerned, just curious.

"Out there getting shot at." Miara said without a trace of remorse.

"Why is Repora shooting at him?"

"We've asked both of them." Tracer said. "Neither of them want to talk about it."

"You know, Tracer," Atar grumbled. "I thought we agreed that you would make him stop this."

"You told me to stop him for Zen's arrival, sir." Tracer corrected. "And I did stop him for a while. We haven't had any rampages for the past three days."

Atar grumbled a bit more, but Zen was more concerned about all the hard work they did the last few days. With an aim like Repora's, then almost everything would be demolished.

Utarz knew the drill. Get on the Ghost, drive around randomly, stray away from Tracer's Wraith and the power room and he was good. It didn't really matter much where he drove, because Repora's aim was so terrible that only the stuff around Utarz got blown apart.

Repora also knew the drill. Wait for Utarz to insult him, listen to Hell to get angry, grab his fuel rod gun and blow stuff up. He didn't care where he shot, just as long as Utarz got hurt. The fact that Utarz wasn't hurt only added to his fury.

Trouble was, the angrier he got, the worse his aim became. This meant that after a while, the only metal object that wasn't destroyed was Utarz's Ghost.

In fact, an interesting note about the 800 Squad was that Utarz's Ghost was almost completely unscathed. No corrosion or scratches or even dust was on it. It was the only thing that Utarz kept clean.

"COME BACK HERE AND DIE, UTARZ!" Repora roared, firing rod after rod after rod.

Utarz gave him something that he learnt from some newspaper articles about human prisoners: the bird. "Go fuck yourself!" He shouted back.

Enraged, Repora reloaded his gun, went inside the base and grabbed the heavy plasma cannon.

POOF

"Now, now." Heaven said nervously. "Revenge won't get you anywhere. It'll just cause more misery."

"Bullshit!" Hell scorned. "If we get rid of Utarz, then we'll be at peace!"

Repora turned to his right shoulder. "Hell's right, Heaven!" He then jogged out the door, screaming, "REVENGE!"

It took about two hours, but eventually, Repora just got bored of the whole thing and went back to his room after taking a couple more pot-shots at Utarz. Satisfied, Utarz went back to his room and promptly got drunk. After all, Repora only went on one rampage per day.

The Sangheili in the bomb shelter had been waiting for the whole thing to blow over by talking and playing some card games (yes, Sangheili have card games. **Everyone **does). The card games seemed to always end with Tracer winning, ("No-one is that lucky!" Zen complained) and the talk was mostly of home and their jobs.

What really struck Zen was how much the other three were convinced of their own incompetence. They all seemed to think along the lines that they were in the 800 Squad because they were stupid, weak and uncoordinated.

That was a bit exaggerated, but that seemed to be what they thought. Zen couldn't believe that. There had to be something they could do right. Like Tracer. He built the whole Map that was almost the size of a small village using only spare parts. No normal Sangheili could do that.

He said nothing, though. He wasn't sure why.

When the explosions ceased, everyone nervously debated who should be the one to stick their head out. Zen eventually volunteered and poked out his head in the hope that it wouldn't get blown to pieces.

Thankfully, nothing happened.

To everyone's annoyance, though, their work had been undone. Burn marks, blown apart metal and snapped wires were everywhere. Zen and Tracer's wall had been completely destroyed. Metal was everywhere, so they set about patching it up.

"No wonder the base is a shambles." Zen muttered. "If this happens every day, then it'd be a miracle if we managed to rebuild a barrel."

"That's why we have four people working on this place." Tracer explained. "Otherwise, we wouldn't get anything done."

"Why do we even have Repora?" Zen asked. "If he's this dangerous, then why is he even alive?"

"We don't know. Seriously, we've tried to get him executed many times, but we're not allowed to."

"How come?"

"Apparently, execution is a privilege." Tracer muttered.

* * *

><p>What you have to understand about the SMBB 800 was that it was in the middle of a small box canyon. It was a circle with a large complex in the middle, a path leading to the caves with the training equipment and a path leading to the landing pad.<p>

It was also very close to the ocean, with the landing pad being directly above the ocean. One could easily fall off if they weren't careful, as there were no railings.

Otherwise, the 800 Squad was completely cut off from the rest of the planet. Even worse, it was the middle of this planet's winter, so there was ice everywhere. Sometimes, there was a blizzard and people couldn't see anything in front of them.

Thankfully, there was no blizzard, but it was still hard to see the small white figure on top of one of the cliffs.

The figure was an Unggoy (Unggoy were also known as Grunts) in almost silver armour. He was holding a Beam Rifle and was currently looking through the scope. The rifle itself had no battery, as the Unggoy had no intention of using it. He was just using it because he had no binoculars.

He was looking at two of the Sangheili, the one in the purple Spec Ops armour and the one in the green Minor armour. They seemed to be trying to fix the wall that the Sangheili in the white Ranger armour had destroyed earlier.

He zoomed in on the green Minor. It was possible that the green one was Zen, but he couldn't be sure. To him, all Sangheili looked the same.

In order to find out, he would have to go down and listen to them talk.

He put down his Beam Rifle and pulled out what looked like hooks. He grabbed hold of them and stabbed one into the side of the cliff. He climbed down with the hooks, looking down to see how close the ground was. He was relying on his armour's white coat to protect him from being spotted.

It worked. He reached the bottom without anyone noticing. Once he hit solid ground, he activated a cloaking device so that no-one would be able to see him. Then he crept slowly towards the two Sangheili.

* * *

><p>"So Repora is the reason why we always have to carry our weapons." Zen stated.<p>

"No." Tracer replied. "Atar's just a bitâ€¦ paranoid."

"About what?"

"Dunno. I guess ever since he got brain damage, he's been on edge."

"He has brain damage?" Zen asked.

"Yeah. I think he fell off of a cliff. That was when he stopped being competent." Tracer added.

"Huh." Zen focused back on his work. "That explains how he became a general."

"Yeah."

"Hey, about Repora's rampages"

"Don't worry. He only goes on one per day."

"Great." Zen muttered. "How are we meant to rebuild this place when Repora blows everything up every day?"

"Well, it'd sure be a lot quicker if Utarz went somewhere isolated whenever Repora got angry, as we've suggested." Tracer grumbled. "But he never listens to us. Ever."

"I've heard it, but I still don't believe it." Zen said. "How can Utarz and Miara be related?"

Tracer shrugged. "I dunno. You can ask Miara, but she gets a little touchy about that subject."

Zen decided to do just that, against Tracer's judgement.

As Zen went to go find Miara, he found that it was hard to find someone in a base this large. After a while, he found Atar and decided to ask him for directions.

"Miara?" Atar thought about it. "Well, last I checked, she was trying to rebuild the door that leads to the watchtower, she might still be there, if she hasn't finished."

"Thanks, sir." Zen said.

"Don't mention it." Atar replied, returning to his work on a wall.

Zen made his way to the watchtower via the memory of Tracer showing it to him. When he got there, though, Miara wasn't there, so he made his way back out.

When he was outside, he heard some snow crunching. He looked around, but didn't see anyone.

"Odd," He thought. He looked around a bit more and then noticed something even odder.

A set of footprints in the snow. Footprints that didn't look like Sangheili footprints. They were much too small and circular.

Uncertainly, Zen walked towards the footprints and was about to touch

them whenâ€|

"Hi, Zen!"

Zen turned around. Miara was walking towards him carrying a toolbox.

Zen straightened up. "Miara."

"What're you doing?" She asked.

"Looking for you." Zen replied, remembering why he was here. "I wanted to ask you a question."

"Okay." She set the toolbox down. "What is it?"

"It's about Utarz." Zen added.

Immediately, Miara stiffened and seemed a bit angry. "What about him?"

"I just don't see how you two can be related." Zen said. "Your personalities differ so much."

Miara sighed. "Well, siblings are hardly ever alike, aren't they?"

"I know, but you and Utarzâ€| you have nothing in common."

Miara looked around. "Actually, we do. We're both pretty stubborn at times."

"â€|Huh." Zen said.

"Yeah. I remember once when we were kidsâ€| Utarz refused to go to a school that my parents wanted him to go to." She seemed amused by the memory. "He wanted to stay with his friends."

"Why would he refuse to go to school."

"It was a military school."

"Oh. Was he that bad?"

"Not as bad as he is now, but yeah." She chuckled. "He used to pull a lot of pranks. But they were mostly harmless. He even took good care of me when I was only a few years old."

A small disturbance sounded to the right. They turned and saw a drunken Utarz 'talking' to Atar.

"While I understand that you are intoxicated," Atar growled in a manner that indicated little to no patience left. "If you don't shut up now, I will break your skull."

Utarz laughed in a deranged way. "You coulâ€| couldn't hit a shiâ€| shisno with a babyâ€|"

"THAT'S IT!" Atar swung around and punched Utarz in the face, knocking him down into the snow. Atar then stormed off.

"And now?" Zen commented.

"And now." Miara agreed. "Honestly, how he got accepted into the military is a wonder."

"Well, that's all I had to ask." Zen said.

"Yeah." Miara picked up the toolbox. "I need to fix that door. Atar insisted."

"See you later, then." Zen said.

"See you." Miara walked inside.

Zen turned around, deciding to investigate the footprints. To his surprise, though, there was now a different set of footprints. The same shape and size, but they lead in a different direction. Towards the cliffs.

Zen followed the tracks, holding up his Needle Rifle. The footsteps lead to the base of the cliff and then stopped. As if the owner of the prints had climbed up the cliff.

In factâ€¦

On closer inspection, Zen found slits in the side of the cliff, the size of small dagger blades. And they lead right up the cliff.

Zen looked up and would've frowned. No-one had any reason to spy on them. They were the 800 Squad after all.

So what was this? Why were there small footprints and dagger-size slits? And who did they belong to?

Getting no answers from the cliff-face, Zen walked back to the base and towards the wall he and Tracer were working on.

When Zen told Tracer of his findings, Tracer was silent for a moment. Then he said, "That makes no sense. Who would go to the trouble of buying Active Camouflage and climbing gear just to spy on us?"

"Who knows?" Zen replied. "Should we tell Atar?"

"No." Tracer sighed. "If we told Atar, then he would become more paranoid than usual. Might tell us to look for footprints. It's much better if we just look for intruders every now and then."

"You sure?"

"Yeah. And tell Miara as well. We might need some anti-cloaking equipment."

"Anti-cloaking?"

"Fire." Tracer said simply. "Lots and lots of fire."

* * *

><p>The Unggoy finished hauling himself up the cliff and looked

around for his Beam Rifle. He saw it and went to get it. Once he did, he made his way across the ice.<p>

Eventually, he reached a point where the snow wasn't as thick as everywhere else. He threw down the rifle (he wouldn't need it anymore) and touched the air around the patch gently.

Almost instantly, a Banshee pretty much popped into existence.

The Unggoy made his way around the back of the Banshee and opened it up. Climbing inside, he pressed a few buttons and the vehicle flared into life.

As he flew the Banshee off of the ice and towards the sky, the Unggoy thought about what he had learned. As derived from the female Sangheili, the green one was Zen. That was good. He had found that out.

The bad news was that he was now suspicious, the Unggoy was sure of it. He had been silently terrified when the Sangheili had almost discovered him. He had been sure that the mission would've failed, right there and then.

Thankfully, it didn't. The Unggoy had slowly fled the moment the female had said Zen's name. He only hoped that the red one wouldn't know of what Zen had seen.

He kept piloting the Banshee towards the atmosphere, then above it and then he was in space. The Unggoy hoped that his methane supply wouldn't run out. The tank was second-hand after all.

After a while though, he reached a small, floating space-ship. It was custom made and the Unggoy had had a hand in building it. He was very proud of it at times.

Now, though, wasn't the time for admiration.

The Banshee flew into a large hatch for vehicles. With the trip over, the Unggoy got out and walked to the brig. There, the red Sangheili was there, reading something. When he saw the Unggoy, he put the touchpad down and looked at him.

"Buzzsaw." He said to the Unggoy. "How did the mission go? Is he there?"

"Yeah." Buzzsaw replied. "They're there all right. Almost got discovered."

"But you didn't?"

"Nope. Never saw me."

"Good." The red Sangheili replied. "Tank is just getting back from his search. I'll call him back now."

"Soâ€|" Buzzsaw said. "Do you have a plan of some sort?"

"Sort of." The Sangheili replied. "We'll send an ambassador first, someone to get Zen isolatedâ€| and then, we'll try to convince him."

"What if they attack our ambassador?"

"They?"

"The rest of his squad."

"They do not matter." The Sangheili replied. "If they leave us alone, then we will leave them alone. If they attack us, thoughâ€¦ then we will attack back."

A screen flared up. On it was a Mgalekgolo, or better known as a Hunter. Its armour was coloured black and it was surrounded by desert.

"Tank has not found 800 Squad on desert planet." It said to the Sangheili.

"That's okay, Tank." He replied. "Buzzsaw had found them instead."

Tank nodded. "So Tank will come back, then."

"Yes." Zen nodded. "You'll be our ambassador."

* * *

><p>Author's notes

So here's a question for you lot: If I made a Tumblr blog where you could ask the 800 Squad questions, would you actually go there?

You can answer in the reviews or in the poll I've made. I would like to make the blog anyway, but I don't want to be wasting time.

Thanks for watching.

Potato.

5. Discovery One

The Halo Universe belongs to Microsoft Studios and 343 Industries. But these characters are my own creation and cannot be used without my permission. If you do use them without my permission, then Miara will set fire to your car, home, family, friends, school, books, Xbox and TV. Enjoy the show.

* * *

><p>The Sangheili 800 Squad

Chapter 4: Discovery One

* * *

><p>February, 2550 (Human Calender)

****0723 Hours****

****SSMB 800****

*** * ***

><p>Zen had gotten used to some pretty weird stuff in the five days that he had been in the 800 Squad, but this pretty much topped it.<p>

He was talking to Tracer that day, who was actually looking through some reports on humans while they were repairing a door. Zen had previously thought that humans weren't worth thinking about, but then Tracer mentioned something that completely bamboozled him.

"They have animations for ****entertainment?!****" Zen exclaimed.

Tracer nodded. "Yup. The one to five minute ones are called 'Youtube videos'. The ten to thirty minute ones are called 'cartoons' and the one to two hour ones are called 'movies'."

Zen processed this. The only animations he ever watched as a child were ones describing how to use a sword. The only entertainment he ever got as a child was wrestling with his brother.

"Seriously?" He asked.

"Yup." Tracer nodded.

"Humans are weird." Zen said, astonished.

"No." Tracer replied. "Just different. You see, they're not a warrior race, like we are. They're more relaxed than we are and don't place as much stock on the military."

"How do you know all this?"

"I've got a friend who works for interrogations." Tracer replied. "Most of the humans we take in alive don't really know anything worth something, but it makes for interesting information."

Zen looked at him curiously. "Why do you want to know anything about them?"

"Because they're an entirely new species!" Tracer said excitedly. "True, we are trying to kill them all, but still! A new species!"

"A species that the Prophets want us to kill."

"It's fascinating, really. Their history, their lifestylesâ€|" Tracer thought about something. "Not their technology though. It sucks."

"Yeah." Zen agreed. "Seriously, physical projectilesâ€| we stopped using those thousands of cycles ago."

"But apart from thatâ€| It's seriously fascinating."

"Maybeâ€|" Zen looked at him. "But still, they're a threat to the Great Journey, remember? We can't admire them too much."

"I wouldn't call it admiration, I would call itâ€| curiosity."

"Okayâ€|" Zen said. A thought struck him. "What do you think is actually at the end of the Great Journey?"

Tracer hesitated. Then he said, "Wellâ€| we would transcend into divinity, right?"

"Right."

"And divinity means holiness, right?"

"Right."

"So, we would become gods, wouldn't we?"

"I guess." Zen looked at the sky wistfully. "I hope we find at least one of the rings soon."

"Yeah."

Zen looked down and blinked. "Damn, I'm out of sheet metal. Can you-?"

"Sure." Tracer stood up and left towards the storage room.

Once Tracer was out of earshot, he took a glance at his motion detector. When nothing showed up, he muttered under his breath, "Great Journey. What nonsenseâ€|"

"Goes to show we have something in common, huh Tracer?"

Tracer turned and saw Utarz leaning against the wall drinking a bottle of Sangheili alcohol.

"I don't want to talk to you, Utarz." Tracer replied. "Leave me be."

"You came here." Utarz replied, taking a swig. "I didn't come to you."

Tracer ignored him. Utarz shrugged and walked off.

He hadn't drunk that much, but Utarz was already feeling slightly sluggish. He took this as a sign to stop for now. He wanted a clear head for when Repora decided to start blowing things up.

As he walked back to his room, he passed Miara, who looked up and saw the bottle in his hand.

"Utarz," She said exasperatedly. "It's seven in the morning."

"Yeah? Well Atar made us get up at three." Utarz replied. "So that's four hours without drink, so I'm off the hook."

Miara remembered something. She stood up and glared at Utarz. "By the way, I need to ask you something."

"What?"

"What did you say to Tracer?"

"Dunno what you're talking about."

"Oh, please." Miara replied. "You told us all to leave the room except you and Tracer. What did you say?"

Utarz grumbled. "Well, if you really want to know, I told Tracer to stay away from you. Happy?"

Miara growled. "I remember telling you that this wasn't any of your business."

Utarz shrugged. "I beg to differ."

"No!" Miara said angrily. "You don't get to differ! You have to stay out of my life, you hear me?!"

"I'm sorry," Utarz snapped. "But I was under the impression that I was your **older **brother. You can't tell me what to do!"

"Oh, forget it!" Miara turned back to her work. "You're impossible to reason with."

"Yeah? Well that makes two of us!" With that, Utarz stormed off.

Miara tried to continue on her wall for about ten minutes, but found that she couldn't concentrate anymore. Giving up, she walked off to her room.

Once there, she put her flamethrower onto the bed. Then she got out a bunch of tools and dismantled the thing before looking at each and every piece to see what wasn't working.

It wasn't that she was out of gas, she had plenty of that. It was because something was either blocking the gas's path or stopping the gas from coming out of the canister completely.

Miara looked at the pieces. The gas canister looked fine. There was no visible blockage in the expelling pipe. She looked at it a bit more carefully but still couldn't see what was wrong.

Maybe there was something wrong with the trigger?

"Yeah," Repora said. "I don't think the trigger's working."

Miara grabbed a knife and was about to lop off Repora's head before she realised who had just talked.

Then she put down the knife, growling in annoyance and frustration. "Don't do that!"

Repora shrugged. "Just offering advice."

"GET OUT!"

"Alright, alright." Repora walked out the door.

Once he was outside, Repora thought about what he should do next.
He decided to call upon Heaven and Hell.

POOF

"How may we help you, Repora?" Heaven asked nicely.

"Yes, how may we serve you?" Hell chuckled deviously.

"Yeah, what should I do now?" Repora asked.

Heaven and Hell considered this for a moment.

"How about you work in your workshop?" Heaven asked. "You've been meaning to finish that C-12."

"Trueâ€¦|" Repora said.

"Ha!" Hell laughed. "That's no fun at all! Why don't we just kill Utarz?"

"I dunnoâ€¦|" Repora said. "It's pretty early. We should probably wait."

"Where's the fun in that?" Hell asked.

"Good pointâ€¦|" Repora considered.

"Now, now," Heaven said nervously. "We don't have to kill him yet. That C-12 could kill him much quicker."

"You're right!" Repora said. "To the workshop!"

Hell grumbled in defeat.

Repora ran to his workshop like a jogger would run to the corner store. Once there, he opened the door, walked inside, closed the door and got out all of his tools. Then he got out a package that had a homemade detonator on the front.

Something that Repora prided himself on was his homemade explosives. They weren't excellent (he was in the 800 Squad after all) but they were pretty good.

Right now, he was working on something that was about three times more powerful than C-4, hence the name C-12. But he needed more gunpowder and a working detonator. Which he didn't have in the base.

So he improvised.

"One flint and steel," He said, pulling out a pixelated object.
"Check! One cup of flammable substance," He pulled out some oil.
"Check! One radio," He pulled out Atar's private radio. "Check! And one crafting bench," He pulled out an entire table out of nowhere.
"Check! Now to-"

BAM

"Repora!" Atar snapped. "Is that my private radio?!"

"Maybeâ€|" Repora hid the radio behind his back. "Maybe notâ€|"

"I require it." Atar said coldly. "Give it back."

"I only need it for a few minutes." Repora pleaded. "Then, once I give it back, it may or may not be in one piece."

"NOW."

"Alright, fineâ€|" Repora grumbled, tossing the radio to Atar. "I'll find something else to use."

Atar grabbed the radio and walked out.

"Stealing my own radioâ€|" Atar muttered. "Is nothing sacred anymore? Honestly, sometimes I feel as if I have no control over my own squadâ€|"

Atar marched back to his radio and eventually found Utarz riding his Ghost. He turned and looked at Atar.

"Hey, Atar." Utarz said. "What're you doing?"

"General," Atar growled. "Or sir. And what I'm doing is none of your business."

Utarz threw his arms up in the air dramatically. "You too? Why is nothing my business anymore?!"

"Well, it would probably have something to do with no-one liking you." Atar replied. "Now, if you would excuse me, I have some important business to attend to."

"Yeah, right." Utarz scoffed. "Only important people have important things to do."

Atar turned around, pulled out his Concussion Rifle and shot at Utarz. Utarz simply pulled the Ghost back and avoided the shot.

Zooming off, Utarz shouted, "You've got crappy aim, sucker!"

Growling, Atar continued to his office.

Some General he was. Ordinary Generals command armies, not small teams composed of incompetent half-wits. He hadn't been in a battle situation for almost two years now. He missed the sound of the cannons firing at the humans. The only cannon that got fired around here was Repora's Fuel Rod gun.

When he reached his office, Atar put the radio on his desk and tuned it to his preferred radio station.

_There we go. _Atar thought as he found the war music station.

Satisfied, Atar leaned back in his chair and listened to songs about great battles and perfect assassinations. It was his favourite type of music, a type of music that no-one else in the base seemed to like.

_Kids these days don't appreciate the classics. _Atar thought.

* * *

><p>While the 800 Squad was enjoying a relatively ordinary day for them, a Phantom had landed on the ice fields, far from the SSMB.<p>

Inside, the small team of three was there: the Sangheili, Buzzsaw and Tank.

The Sangheili opened the doors and turned to Tank. "Remember, avoid harming anyone if possible. We want to make a good impression."

Tank nodded.

Buzzsaw snorted. "What good will that do when they figure out who we are?"

"It might make them think twice." The Sangheili suggested.

"But they're just as religious as the rest of the Covenant!" Buzzsaw complained. "They might just decide to shoot us when they get the chance!"

"Or, they might listen to us because we sound convinced!" The Sangheili snapped.

As Buzzsaw and the Sangheili argued, Tank jumped down from the Phantom onto the ice. He looked up and asked loudly, "Which way is Sangheili base?"

Buzzsaw leaned out and pointed in a direction. "About thirteen clicks that way."

Tank nodded and headed off. The Phantom left.

It took a good while before Tank reached the location of the base (Hunters were pretty slow after all) but eventually, he reached the place.

To Tank, it didn't look like much. A good chunk of the place seemed like it was under construction. It was also way too oversized for a squad of five or six.

Tank looked around. He could see Zen. He was with a purple-armoured Sangheili and he appeared to be talking to him.

Tank looked around again, this time to see if there was a way to get down that wouldn't kill the Lekgolo controlling his legs.

He spied a white armoured Sangheili, almost invisible due to the snow. He appeared to be carrying a Fuel Rod gun and a large sack of unknown objects.

* * *

"Never mind about that!" Tracer said, jumping up. "Run for it!"

* * *

><p>Tank stared at the scene in bewilderment.<p>

He didn't know what he expected when the white one shouted 'Utarz', but whatever he expected, he did not expect a full blown rampage in an attempt to kill a teammate.

Who were these soldiers and what was wrong with them?

The white one was firing fuel rods at the blue one who was fleeing in a Ghost. In fact, it looked like the blue one was putting barely any effort into avoiding the shots, almost like he was used to this and he knew what to do.

This went on for about an hour, with the white one not showing any signs of giving up. However, as the blue one turned into a corner, the white one turned around and walked to a side of the cliff, almost directly below where Tank was standing. As Tank watched, the white one attached some brownish packages to the side of the cliff, and then walked away a fair distance.

At this point, the blue one drove through an exposed passageway and near the side of the cliff. At this point, the white one held up what looked like a button of some sort and then pressed it down. The blue one seemed to know what would happen and quickly spun around and zoomed away.

Thankfully for the blue one, it took a while before the packages exploded.

Unfortunately, the explosion was so strong it reached up to where Tank was.

Tank stumbled, backing away from the edge. As he straightened himself, he heard a loud ****CRACK****.

Tank looked down and saw that the portion of the ledge he was standing on had come loose from the explosion.

Due to this, it was starting to fall from the cliff.

"Oh." Tank said. He would've sworn if he knew any words.

And then he started to fall.

* * *

><p>Repورا watched in amazement as the cliff practically fell apart from the C-12. All the pieces fell together in one great big pile, destroyed beyond recognition.<p>

"I really have to make that stuff again someday." Repورا said to himself.

Repورا climbed over the wreckage in order to get Utarz. True, he could go around, but that would take longer.

As he was climbing over, he saw a grey piece of armour sticking out from the rubble. Curious, Repورا bent over and pulled it out. It was hard.

Eventually, he pulled the rest of the armour that the piece he was pulling was attached to. To his surprise, he found a Hunter. An

unconscious Hunter to be precise.

"You shouldn't be here." Repora said.

Utarz pulled up in his Ghost. "Hey, have you given up or something? Because I- Whoa! Where'd that guy come from?"

"I don't know." Repora said pleasantly. "Should we tell Atar?"

"Pfft." Utarz shook his head. "No. He'll probably become paranoid, tell us to strengthen our defencesâ€|"

"And to strengthen our defences, we'd need more explosives! Which I can make!" Repora exclaimed. "I'm going to tell Atar!"

"I hate you so much." Utarz muttered.

"Me too!" Repora called as he went to the bomb shelter.

* * *

><p>"Is he finished?" Zen asked.<p>

"Can't be." Tracer pressed his head against the door. "He only started three minutes ago."

"Can you hear anything?" Miara asked.

"Noâ€|"

KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK

Tracer jumped back and massaged his head.

"Go away." Atar called.

"Guys!" Repora called back. "There's something you should see out here!"

"Unless you finally killed Utarz, we don't care." Atar replied.

"But I found a Hunter!"

Tracer blinked. "A Hunter? You mean an Mgalekgolo?"

"Yeah!"

"Alright, we'll come out." Atar said. "But only if you promise that you won't shoot at us."

"Silly Atar! I only shoot at Utarz."

"At least, you try to." Zen muttered.

"Alrightâ€| that'll have to do." Atar sighed, opening the door.

"Yay!" Repora jumped up and down like a video game character. "This

way!"

They followed him to a massive pile of rock and rubble. The fact that that was there wasn't all that surprising, but the giant, armour-clad figure that was on top of it was.

"You were telling the truth!" Miara said.

"Of course I was!" Repora said cheerfully.

Utarz, who was leaning on a nearby wall, said spitefully, "I bet that if I told you that this lug was out here, you'd send me on my way."

Everyone ignored him.

"This isn't rightâ€|" Atar muttered. "What would one of these things be doing out here?"

"He may be injured." Tracer said. "We should take him to the medical bay."

"Right," Atar turned to everyone else. "Who are our strongest soldiers?"

Repora raised a hand. No-one else did.

"Right then," Atar said, annoyed. "Repora, Zen and Utarz, drag the Hunter to the medical bay."

"You can't tell me what to do, Atar." Utarz grumbled.

"General, or sir." Atar snarled. "And if you don't do this, I will give Repora permission to stab you until you die."

Utarz sighed and grabbed a leg.

* * *

><p>Tank was floating in a black void for what seemed to be three seconds before the world started to come back into focus.<p>

He wasn't outside anymore. He was in some sort of room on a large table. A purple-armoured Sangheili was standing over him, holding some sort of instrument.

The Sangheili barbled in its language.

"What?" Tank said groggily. Then he blinked and said, "Repeat?"

The Sangheili said the same thing, except this time Tank understood it as, "Are you okay?"

Tank nodded.

"Good. My general will like to have a word with you."

Tank really wanted to stand up. Unfortunately, his body wasn't built for bending.

"Tank has job to do." He said.

"Well, you can do it once my leader has asked you a few questions."

Tank said nothing.

Taking his silence as a 'very well', the purple Sangheili opened the door. A Sangheili general walked in, glaring at Tank in distrust.

"Good morning." He said to Tank. "I am General Atar. Who are you?"

"I am Tank."

"Your **real **name."

Tank stayed silent

"The silent type, are we?" Atar growled. "Let's try again. Why are you here?"

"I wish to speak to Zen." Tank spoke.

"Why?"

Tank stayed silent.

"Who are you working for?"

Tank stayed silent.

"Are there more of you?"

Silence.

Starting to lose patience with Tank's silence, Atar growled, "I know that Hunters travel in groups of two. Where is the other one of you?"

Tank was silent for a bit. Then he said gruffly, "Dead."

Atar looked at him. Then he said, "My apologies."

Tank shrugged. "You did not know."

Atar went back to questioning. "Rightâ€¦ do you work for command?"

Silence.

"Does command need Zen? Is he getting out of here?"

Silence.

"You may think that you're being smart with the whole silence thing," Atar growled. "But you're not. I'll have you know that I killed a human Demon once! And I'm sure that they've killed plenty of your kind as well. So you better tell me what I want to hear, or you won't

be saying anything ever again."

Tank stopped listening once Atar mentioned the word 'Demon'.

"You killed a Demon?" Tank asked. His tone betrayed surprise.

"Yep!" Atar said with relish. "Back in the day, anyhow. Ripped out his spine while he was still conscious. Mind you, that little encounter took a toll on me as well."

Tank stared at Atar. Then he said, "I must speak to Zen."

"Why?"

Instead of silence, Tank said, "I am not allowed to say."

"Why not?"

"My leader has forbidden it."

"Do you work for the Covenant?"

Tank hesitated. Then he said, "No."

Atar looked at Tank for a bit more. Then he turned and left, gesturing for Tracer to follow.

Everyone else in the squad was outside the door. Tracer shut the door so that Tank wouldn't hear anything.

"So what did you get out of him?" Miara asked.

"Only that his name is Tank, he's working for someone outside the Covenant and he wants to speak to Zen." Atar replied.

"Nothing else?" Miara asked. "Did you tell him about the human Demon you killed?"

"Wait, what?!" Zen exclaimed.

"Yeahâ€¦" Atar grumbled. "But he seemed more impressed than intimidated."

"Hold on," Zen held up a hand. "You killed a human Demon."

"Back before I got brain damage." Atar said with pride.

"But thenâ€¦ why are you here?"

"Well, I did get brain damage."

"But still, a human ****Demon****. Someone who does that shouldn't be here!"

"Can I interrogate him?" Repora asked.

"Negative." Atar replied. "We want information, not a shivering wreck."

"What I want to know is what he wants with Zen." Tracer said. "Sure, he's a good soldier, but if he doesn't work for the Prophetsâ€¦"

"Then he's got a good gig going on." Utarz said from across the room.

Atar turned and shot a plasma bolt at Utarz.

He yelled in alarm and ducked down.

"In any case," Atar continued, not bothering to look at Utarz. "I don't think Zen should speak to Tank until we know exactly what he wants."

"It could be important." Zen said. "Although, I'm not sure if I'm that important, reallyâ€¦"

"I think that we should give Tank what he wants." Tracer said. "If we don't, we'll have to keep him here and that would use up supplies."

"Do Hunters eat a lot?" Miara asked.

"Yup. You have to feed each Lekgolo in its body. Individually."

Atar grumbled, but said, "I guess you're right."

"Soâ€¦ do I go in?" Zen asked.

"May as well."

Zen opened and went through the door. Tank looked at him.

"You wanted to speak to me?" Zen asked.

"You are Zen?" Tank asked back.

"Well, yesâ€¦"

"My leader wishes to speak to you."

Zen blinked, then said, "Why didn't you say that before?"

"Only you may hear." Tank replied.

Zen sighed. "So, where do I meet your leader?"

"If I can make radio call, I will arrange meeting."

Zen looked at Atar. He looked like he was sure he was going to regret this, but he nodded anyway.

Tracer went in and helped Zen get Tank off of the table, which was no easy feat.

After nodding curtly, Tank held up his cannon arm. It beeped.

"Iro." Tank said. "We need a meeting point."

* * *

><p>Author's notes

****Activate the actual plot line!****

****Now, only one person voted on the poll I put up, soâ€¦| no ask blog.****

****Ah well.****

****Thanks for watching.****

****Potato.****

6. Revelations

****The Halo Universe belongs to Microsoft Studios and 343 Industries. But these characters are my own creation and cannot be used without my permission. If you do use them without my permission, then Zen will snipe your head off from afar. Enjoy the show.****

* * *

><p>The Sangheili 800 Squad

****Chapter 5: Revelations****

* * *

><p>February, 2550 (Human Calender)

****0900 Hours****

****SSMB 800****

* * *

><p>"We leave now." Tank said suddenly.<p>

Everyone else in the room blinked and turned to him. For the past couple of hours, after talking to the one he called 'Iro', Tank had went to a corner and sat silently, looking at everyone, especially Atar for some reason.

After getting past the fact that there was a Hunter in the room, everyone relaxed a bit, although they stayed in the room as the result of a decision made by Atar: They needed to know when Tank was ready to leave.

So the squad jumped into casual conversation. Tank took no part in it, although he seemed to make a noise similar to a chuckle when Miara punched Utarz in the face during an argument.

Now, he said this so suddenly that no-one moved for a moment.

"Okay." Zen said. "Where's your leader?"

"On outskirts of your base." Tank replied, pulling himself up.

"Outskirts?" Utarz raised the ice pack from his face. "You mean the area outside the base?"

"Yes."

"Which is blocked off by cliffs."

"Yes."

"Well, how the hell is Zen gonna get up there?" Utarz asked.

"The Phantom, dumbarse." Tracer replied. "We can fly up there and drop Zen off at the meeting point."

"No." Tank said. "Only Zen is allowed in meeting."

"Why just me?" Zen asked.

Tank said nothing.

"This guy is a proper fucking conversationalist, isn't he?" Utarz said sarcastically.

Even Atar had to admit he that was amusing.

"Well, let's go then." Miara put down her drink. "No sense staying around here."

"Aye." Tracer opened the door and gestured to Tank. "After you."

Tank nodded and walked through the door.

When they reached the vehicle bay, Zen got a first look at the Phantom. It was a lot like the rest of the base: shabby, mostly broken (there was no roof for instance) and much too oversized for a mere six soldiers.

Well, plus one.

Tracer pressed a button on the side of the ship. This button caused the doors to move down and allow soldiers to climb in.

Nothing happened.

"Not again." Tracer muttered. "Repora, could youâ€|?"

"Sure." Repora walked over to the button and savagely kicked it.

The doors swung downwards.

"You just need to apply a little force." Repora said happily, skipping inside.

Tank turned to Atar and asked, "Is he well?"

Atar blinked in surprise, then said, "No, he's actually clinically

insane. Apparently something happened to him in the past, but Repora himself has forgotten what it was."

Utarz scratched his head guiltily at this. But since he was at the back, nobody noticed.

Once they were all inside, Zen walked up to Tracer, who was at the driver's controls, and said to him, "Tracer, if you can fix an entire base, then why can't you fix a Phantom?"

"I've never gotten around to it." Tracer said. "I'm sure you can understand that."

Zen's memory flashed back to the past two days plus the morning, where he and Tracer had been working on the exact same piece of wall for the entire time.

"Yes. I can." Zen sighed.

Zen half expected the ship to not even lift off of the ground. But it did, albeit with some flashing lights and sparking. And it was slow.

Finally, they reached the top of the cliffs. Tracer opened the doors. He turned to Zen and said, "Good luck."

Zen nodded. He then stepped off of the Phantom along with Tank. Then, the others bid farewell, minus Utarz and then the Phantom dipped out of sight.

Zen turned to Tank, who gestured to follow him. Tank then set off in a seemingly random direction into the snow-covered fields.

Zen followed him for what seemed to be half an hour. As he walked, he noticed that the area was actually pretty nice for a planet without civilisation. There were trees of unknown names (frozen at the moment) and alien animals that seemed neither intelligent nor brave, as they scampered away from them as they approached.

"How much further?" Zen asked Tank.

"Not long." Tank grunted.

'Not long' turned out to be five seconds.

Zen stepped into a clearing. He knew he was at the right place because there was a Phantom parked right in the middle of the clearing. Standing inside it was a Sangheili in maroon custom armour. Leaning against it was a Grunt in silver armour, looking quite bored with the whole thing, really.

Tank held out his shield in order to stop Zen from walking any further. Then he walked to the Phantom and, like the Grunt, stood at the side of the door.

"Greetings, Zen." The Sangheili said.

"I take it that you're Iro, then." Zen said.

"Yes, that would be me."

Zen looked at the Grunt. "You're the one who was spying on us two days ago."

"Yeah." The Grunt nodded. "The name's Buzzsaw."

"Why, exactly, were you spying on us?"

"I was looking for you." Buzzsaw replied. "I didn't find you on the other two planets, soâ€¦"

"You were looking for me?"

Iro nodded. "Zen. I expect that you're wondering what exactly is happening."

"That, and 'why me'?" Zen replied.

"First, I feel that I should explain who we are." Iro pointed to Buzzsaw. "You see Buzzsaw over here?"

Zen nodded. Iro continued. "He used to be one of the bravest Grunts in the Covenant. He got sent on missions that no other Grunt would dare to go on."

"What kind of missions?" Zen asked.

"Minor ones." Buzzsaw stated. "Recon, assault, assassinationsâ€¦ pretty much any role that isn't cannon fodder."

Iro nodded. "One day though, he made a mistake and found himself in a lot of trouble. He requested for backup from his command. He got refused."

"Miserable, high-and-mighty, think they're soâ€¦" Buzzsaw grumbled.

"Rightâ€¦" Zen wasn't sure what this had to do with anything, but he kept listening.

Iro then gestured to Tank. "Tank lost his bond brother to a human Demon, or as the humans call them, Spartans. He would try to avenge his brother by attacking only Spartans, but command tired of him and abandoned him on a random planet."

"Plant was one Buzzsaw was stranded on." Tank added. "Tank helped him survive. Tank had no quarrel with Buzzsaw. Only Demons."

"Uh, huhâ€¦" Zen said. He was starting to make a connection with what these guys had in common.

"I, myself, was a high-ranking warrior. Unfortunately, on one mission to retrieve a Forerunner artefact, I was paired with a squad of Brutes. We got into trouble and I got stuck. They left me for dead."

"Thankfully, I freed myself and fled the planet using a human spacecraft. Thanks to a friend of mine, I discovered the location of Tank and Buzzsaw. I went to their planet andâ€¦"

"â€¦Formed your own band." Zen said, having made the connection.
"Joined by hatred of the Covenant."

"Pretty much." Buzzsaw agreed.

Tank shrugged.

"In a sense." Iro said.

Zen wasn't sure if he trusted these guys. He was dead loyal to the Covenant and its cause. For these guys to be defectors, wellâ€¦

It wasn't exactly a good first impression.

"What this have to do with me?" Zen asked.

"Do you fancy yourself an open-minded person?" Iro queried.

"â€¦I guess so." Zen said. He certainly kept his options open.

"That's why we need you." Iro said. "You are the most open-minded Sangheili I've ever met. You also good at speeches, good at rallying others."

"Well, I wouldn't call school speeches that impressiveâ€¦" Zen said modestly, then blinked, realizing what Iro just said. "Hold on, are you suggesting-?"

"You're a good soldier," Iro continued. "One of the most fearless I've seenâ€¦"

"Stop, stop, stop." Zen put up his hands. "Are you suggesting that I join you guys?"

"That is correct." Iro said, seemingly satisfied.

"And what, try to convince everyone that the Covenant isn't all that great?"

Iro hesitated. "Wellâ€¦ not exactly."

Zen looked at him. "What do you mean?"

"Zenâ€¦ I know you may not believe meâ€¦ but the Prophets have lied to you."

"Aboutâ€¦?"

"The Great Journey."

"The Greatâ€¦" Zen suddenly realised who these guys really were.
"Hold on a minuteâ€¦ you guys are Heretics!"

"That's certainly one word for us." Iro commented.

Zen immediately reached for his rifle.

Tank pointed his cannon towards him.

Zen moved his hand away from the gun, but he still glared at Iro. "You guys are part of the organisation that's trying to cause the Covenant to fall apart! Trying to seize control over us! And you come up to me and ask me to join you guys?!"

"Told you he'd take it like this." Buzzsaw said to Iro.

Ignoring him, Iro said, "Those are ignorant accusations. We do not require control over anyone. We simply want to convince everyone of the truth. And we don't work for an organisation."

"Iro found evidence of lie back on Forerunner planet." Tank said. "Artefact was catalogue. Had an entry on humans in it. Showed that humans were Forerunner inheritors, or Reclaimers."

"Iro tried to tell the Prophets about this." Buzzsaw said. "But you know what? Turned out that they already knew that. They just didn't tell anyone."

"Oh, bullshit!" Zen said angrily. "If the Prophets knew that the Journey was false, then they would tell us! They wouldn't just keep us in the dark!"

"Yes, they would." Buzzsaw countered. "Think about it. The Prophets have complete control over the Covenant. If they revealed that the journey was false, then they would lose that power. There's also the possibility of revolutionâ€|"

"Ridiculous." Zen shook his head. "Next, you'll be telling me what the Rings do."

"Unfortunately, we don't know what they do yet." Iro said. "But they are irrelevant at the moment. What is important-"

"I am not joining you three!" Zen snapped. "You think I'm just going to publically declare myself an enemy of the Prophets?! My parents have already disowned me!"

"Zen, listen." Iro urged. "If you consider yourself open-minded, then why are you being so blind?"

Zen started to say something, but stopped.

"Truth's name is a title of irony." Iro declared. "He does nothing but sprout lies in order to keep the Covenant intact. He's known the role of the humans for the entirety of this war and yet he still orders their extinction."

"You can change this." Tank said to Zen. "You can help us reveal actual truth."

Zen glared at the three. "Even if I were willing to help you, how would I be able to help you lot? I'm completely out of contact with everyone else I know and the only ones around are a bunch of idiots."

"Who could be our latest recruits." Buzzsaw said.

"â€|What." Zen said blankly.

"Just because they aren't good soldiers doesn't mean they're useless." Buzzsaw said. "They might be good at other things."

Zen just shook his head again. "No. I will not join you."

"Open-minded." Iro reminded.

"The Great Journey is a faith, remember?" Zen pointed out. "It exists to give others hope. I need that hope. Here, I have literally nothing else. Except those guys back there."

"And this is your final decision?" Iro inquired.

"Yes." Zen said with a finality that said that the meeting was over.

Iro sighed in disappointment. "Very well. Metal Team, we're leaving."

Zen nodded and turned away. He walked off back to base without looking back.

The Metal Team jumped back onto their Phantom. Iro looked at Zen before closing the doors and flying off.

"Well," Buzzsaw said drily. "That went about as well as could be expected."

"If you had so little faith in Zen," Iro snapped. "Then why were you trying to convince him as well?"

"Call it a last ditch effort!" Buzzsaw snapped back.

"We can still convince him." Tank said.

Buzzsaw snorted. Iro looked at him. "What do you mean?"

"We can show Zen truth." Tank responded.

"Show him the truth?" Iro asked. Then he said with understanding, "The artefact!"

Buzzsaw blinked, then jumped up. "Of course! Why didn't we think of that?"

"Evidence from artefact would be too confronting to deny." Tank continued. "Zen would join us, maybe 800 Squad if we showed them too."

"Of course, of course!" Iro said. "But it'd be difficult to show them the artefact. Now that they know who we are, they won't trust us."

"Maybe we could set it up so that they find the artefact." Buzzsaw suggested. "That way, they'll discover it, find out the truth and they'll have to admit that we were right!"

"Brilliant!" Iro said happily. "So where's the artefact?"

Buzzsaw double blinked. "Ehâ€| Tank knows where it is, don't you, Tank?"

Tank stepped back. "Noâ€|" He said uncertainly. "I thought Iro knew where it was."

There was a small silence as they processed this.

"Oh, gods above." Iro muttered.

"Great. Just great!" Buzzsaw said angrily. "So no-one knows where it is?! Congrats, Iro, congrats!"

"Do not blame Iro for your misplacement." Tank growled.

"**My **misplacement?! Iro's the one who found the damn thing in the first place!"

"Yes. Over five years ago!" Tank snarled. "Is not Iro's fault!"

"Oh, yes it is, big guy!"

At this, Tank's cannon arm did something strange. Parts of it shifted as though they were trying to move, but then they moved back. Tank looked at it, frustrated. The parts moved again, then shifted back. Move, then shift. Again and again.

"So your arm still isn't working, huh?" Buzzsaw asked.

"No." Tank grunted. "Tank needs Gears to repair it."

"Maybe Gears knows where the artefact is." Iro suggested.

Buzzsaw snorted. "Gears hasn't been to the base for almost two years. Why would he know where it is?"

"Well, he still monitors the base in his almost endless free time." Iro said. "He would know where everything is because of the surveillance cameras."

"Alright." Buzzsaw said. "But how'll we contact him? We can't blow his cover."

Iro activated the Phantom and took the driver's seat. "He'll find a way. He's Gears."

* * *

><p>"They were WHAT?!" Atar thundered.<p>

Zen had just gotten back to base and told everyone what had happened and who the group was. As expected, their responses were more or less outraged.

"Yeah." Zen said. "Heretics."

Atar spluttered in fury. "They- They're part of the group that is trying to ruin everyone's faith?!"

"Just for control?!" Miara added.

"Actually, they seemed pretty convinced." Zen said.

"Seriously?" Utarz exclaimed. "Those fuckheads actually believe that the Journey's not real?"

"I'm surprised you do." Zen replied.

"Hey, I need something to believe in, don't I?"

"What's a heretic?" Repora asked curiously.

Everyone stared at him.

"What?" He asked.

Atar sighed. "A heretic is someone who doesn't believe in the Great Journey and actively goes about trying to disprove it. Which they can't. Our religion is completely foolproof. Nothing could possibly go wrong with it!"

Repora had to stop himself from blurting out the events of Halo: Combat Evolved.

Tracer refrained himself from speaking his opinions.

Everyone else agreed and didn't pay much attention to the others.

"And they had the nerve to ask you to join them?" Miara asked, disgusted.

"Yup."

"I assume, of course, that you said no." Atar growled.

"Yes sir." Zen said. He added quickly, "In the sense that I'm confirming your assumption."

"Good." Atar said. "We'll make sure that those three don't ever come here again."

"How?" Utarz asked.

"By strengthening our defences of course!" Atar declared.

"Right. So how'll we do that?"

"Simple!" Atar said. "First, we'll build motion-sensing turrets all around the perimeter of the base that will be programmed to shoot at anything that moves unless the target is green, purple, white, yellow, or red."

"What about blue?" Utarz asked nervously.

Ignoring him, Atar continued. "Then, at midday sharp, everyone will patrol the perimeter to make sure that no-one is around and then we will perform a quick check of the personnel and surveillance cameras. We will also have anti-aircraft cannons that will shoot down their Phantom should they approach. Finally, we will have Utarz dance in

front of the turrets. Everyone understand?"

Atar was greeted by five blank stares.

"That is highlyâ€¦" Tracer searched for the right word. "Ambitious, sir."

"What do you mean?" Atar asked.

"Well, for a start, we don't have the resources to build any sort of automated guns, let alone an AA gun. Every piece of metal we have is being used to repair the base."

"Which we wouldn't have to use if the base didn't get constantly blown up." Zen muttered.

"Secondly, we're not allowed to kill Utarz, remember?" Tracer added. "His father is strangely protective of him."

"He thinks I can change for the better." Utarz snorted.

"Which is a delusion." Miara said.

"Finally, they don't seem to be much of a threat." Tracer said. "They're only three abandoned soldiers. Sure, Tank seems to be intimidating, but if they wanted to harm us, then they probably would've killed Zen before he got back."

"Alright, alright." Atar muttered. "Still, I want to do something militaristic about them."

"What about joining them?" Repora asked. "It could be seen as a tactical decision and therefore a militaristic decision. And if we join them, they'll never bother us about joining them."

Everyone stared at Repora for a few seconds.

Then Atar pointed to the door and said, "Get out."

* * *

><p>The ship that Iro, Tank and Buzzsaw had built wasn't especially large, but everything was everywhere and it was virtually impossible to find small to medium sized objects. The artefact was about the size of a computer monitor, so it too was lost.<p>

Thankfully, Gears had a photographic memory.

Iro opened a door in the ship and talked into a radio. "Right, so it's in this room?"

Buzzsaw and Tank couldn't hear the reply, despite being right behind Iro. A moment of silence passed before Iro said, "Under theâ€¦? Okay."

Iro walked over to a large piece of sheet metal and lifted it up. Underneath was a smooth, cone-shaped object with a cut-off top. Around the edge of the top were hooks. All around the artefact were markings. Forerunner markings.

"Thanks Gears." Iro said. "You really are a help sometimes."

A pause as Gears talked.

"Yes. He's worth it." Iro replied. "Somewhat."

Another pause.

"Yes, okay Gears." Iro said, slightly impatient. "Thank you, goodbye."

Iro hung up.

"Good old Gears." Buzzsaw said. "Chatty, but trustworthy."

"So how will we do this?" Tank asked.

"We'll launch an escape pod with the artefact in it down to the planet." Iro explained, picking up the artefact. "We'll make sure that it'll create a large noise, loud enough for the 800 Squad to hear it. If they're curious enough, they'll go check it out and see what's inside."

"And then, they'll switch on the artefact." Buzzsaw finished. "And realise the truth."

"Precisely."

"So where exactly are we launching this thing, anyway?" Buzzsaw asked.

"Well, what are the 800 Squad base coordinates?"

Buzzsaw thought about it. "Uh 53.47, 2.23."

"Good! We'll just send it there."

"Won't it just land in the middle of base?" Tank asked.

"Well yes, but they'll still look at it." He handed the artefact to Buzzsaw. "Send this down."

Buzzsaw nodded and went off to the escape pods. Once there, he shoved the artefact into a random one and set some coordinates.

"Let's see!" He said. "53.47 2.23 and there we go!" Buzzsaw walked away from the airlock and pressed a button.

The pod ejected into space.

Satisfied, Buzzsaw walked to the control room. In about an hour or two, they'll probably hear pleas for forgiveness and requests to join them.

Buzzsaw looked at a screen. He zoomed into the coordinates he set in and waited.

The screen showed what looked like a forest.

Buzzsaw blinked. That wasn't the 800 Squad base. What was going

on?

Buzzsaw zoomed out and looked for a purple half-destroyed complex. He found it at the coordinates of 51.51 and 0.13.

It took him a few seconds to figure out what this meant.

"Shit." He said.

* * *

><p>Author's notes

****And now, you know!****

****Thanks for watching.****

****Potato.****

7. I've Got a Job For You

****The Halo Universe belongs to Microsoft Studios and 343 Industries. But these characters are my own creation and cannot be used without my permission. If you do use them without my permission, then Tank will sit on you and crush you. Then, just for effect, he will demolish all of your worldly possessions. Enjoy the show.****

* * *

><p>The Sangheili 800 Squad

****Chapter 6: I've Got a Job For Youâ€|****

* * *

><p>February 2550 (Human Calender)

****2018 Hours****

****SSMB 800****

* * *

><p>Miara couldn't sleep.<p>

Normally, this wouldn't be a problem. Just work on the flamethrower a bit until tired, then go to sleep.

However, she had been trying to fix the same problem for almost a month now. Continuing to work on the flamethrower would just make her frustrated. No, what she needed was to relax.

Sighing, Miara sat up. Tossing and turning in bed wasn't relaxing at all, so she decided to go for a different method. She got out of bed, put on her armour and a large, furry coat, then stepped outside.

She shivered upon leaving her room. Days during winter were cold enough, but the nights were fucking freezing. It was almost impossible to focus on anything other than the cold. Thankfully,

there was no blizzard tonight, so the weather wasn't as bad as it could be.

Miara walked over to the vehicle bay. She figured that talking to Tracer might help and his room was right next to the bay. He preferred this so he could work on his prototype Wraith and give the vehicles proper maintenance. He always worked until about 12, so he'd still be up.

Miara liked talking to Tracer. His intelligent thought processes intrigued her and he was nice to talk to. Unless you were someone he didn't like.

Tracer was indeed working on his Wraith. Hearing Miara walk up behind him, he turned around and asked, "Miara. How come you're out of bed?"

"Couldn't sleep." Miara said. "Too much on my mind."

"Like?"

"Heretics. Zen. Utarz. My stupid flamethrower. Repora. The fucking cold." Miara sat down next to him. "You know, that sort of stuff."

Tracer nodded. "Huh."

"So, what're you doing?"

"Trying to fix an error with this thing." Tracer muttered, gesturing to the back of the Wraith. "The anti-grav engine keeps shorting out. Dunno if it's because of too much electronite or too little."

"Electronite?"

"Liquid electricity." Tracer explained. "The stuff is much more powerful than a basic plasma engine."

"Huh."

"Trouble is, I can't see how much electronite is in there, so I have to take out the tank and see how much I need, drain the electronite and then put the correct amount in." Tracer looked at Miara. "So how is your technology going? Fixed that problem with the flamethrower?"

Miara shook her head. "Stupid thing won't spit out an ember. I've tried replacing the trigger, loosening the gas tank, everything. It still won't work."

"Maybe I could have a look at it?" Tracer asked.

"No. This is something I want to do myself."

"Alright." Tracer continued taking the tank out.

Miara looked at Tracer. He was truly the first male she had felt genuine attraction to. He was nice to her and he was a smart soldier.

He placed honour in high regard and knew when to be angry at Utarz. The only thing that really gave him away was his poor aim and the fact that he was in the 800 Squad.

That said, she was in the 800 Squad as well, so she supposed that it was fine.

Miara sighed and looked at Tracer. "Hey, uhâ€¦ Tracer?"

"Hm?"

"Can I talk to you about something?"

"Sure."

"Wellâ€¦ we've known each other for a while, right?"

"About two years." Tracer said. "If my calculations are correct."

"Yeahâ€¦ wellâ€¦" Unsure of how to continue, Miara quickly thought up something. "Well, when one has known another person for a long timeâ€¦ thenâ€¦"

"Yes?" Tracer was paying attention, even though he was still working on the Wraith.

Miara tried to continue and probably would've succeeded if it weren't for the distant explosion that interrupted her thoughts.

Tracer blinked and looked up. "Did you hear that?"

"Yeah." Miara looked outside, worried. "Do you think it was thunder?"

"Noâ€¦ we would've seen lightning beforehand." Tracer stood up. "I think something crashed on the planet."

"Something crashed?"

"Yeahâ€¦ some satellite imagery might've shown what it is." Tracer stood up and ran off.

Miara blinked, remembering what she was going to say. "Hold on, Tracer!"

Too late.

He was already gone.

Miara growled in frustration. So close, yet so far.

She followed Tracer, ignoring the cold for the most part. She found him in the radio room, talking to the Kig-Yar at the receiving end.

"So if you get me theâ€¦?" The Kig-Yar asked.

"Yeah, yeah, sure." Tracer said impatiently. "Just give me the satellite image."

"Sure man." The Kig-Yar said dazedly. "Here you go."

An image of the SSMB came up. Tracer started switching cameras, noticing Miara in the door. "You should really get to bed."

"Butâ€|" Miara began.

"Trust me, you might need it." Tracer said. "You know how early Atar wakes us up."

Miara sighed, giving up for now. "Don't remind me."

* * *

><p>February 2550 (Human Calender)

0302 Hours

SSMB 800

* * *

><p>Mornings were always early at the SSMB. Atar would start a morning by roaring the words 'GET UP' into the intercom, which would blast out in all areas of the base at maximum volume. All the inhabitants of the base were quite used to this by now and would treat this as one would treat an alarm clock.<p>

Except Zen, as he was still relatively new.

So when Atar roared 'GET UP' at max volume at 3 am into Zen's room, he jumped in alarm and grabbed his Needle Rifle before realising what just happened.

Zen sighed and put down the rifle. He wasn't sure he would ever get used to this base.

However, Atar continued speaking with the morning announcements.

"Right," He said. "Assuming you shisnos have gotten out of bed, I want it known that all and I mean all, building duties will not be going ahead as planned. Tracer has discovered something has crashed some few hundred galactic metres away from our position and would like to share it all with you. So everyone will be reporting to the radio room, RIGHT NOW! ON THE DOUBLE!"

"Alright, alright." Zen mumbled blearily, reaching for his armour. "This better beat rebuilding the same wall all over again."

Once he had his armour on and had picked up his rifle again, he walked out for the radio room.

On the way, he encountered Repora and Utarz, who were talking for some reason.

"I'm just saying that if this is an example of plot development, then I should be allowed to kill you during the story." Repora said eagerly. "You know, for dramatic effect."

"Repora," Utarz grumbled, apparently not really wanting to talk to him. "I have had a really annoying time today. I couldn't jack off last night because it was too cold and I woke up this morning to find that you were in my room and the boar trap you place outside my door every day had been replaced with a landmine. So I really don't want to talk to right now."

Repora shook his head in disappointment. "Really Utarz, is that all you can think about? You have to think about the author and his reputation on Fanfiction!"

Zen had absolutely no idea what Repora was talking about.

Utarz muttered, "I think your mother smoked too much crack when she was pregnant."

Repora pulled a knife out of nowhere. "Come again?" He asked viciously.

"Nothing." Utarz said quickly.

By the time they reached the radio room, Zen had decided that Utarz and Repora deserved each other.

"Zen." Atar acknowledged once he stepped inside. "Good morning."

"Morning, sir." Zen said, trying not to show any signs of tiredness.

Tracer was already in the room and so was Miara. Tracer was fiddling with the dashboard in front of the monitor while Miara was sitting in a chair, her flamethrower in her lap. Atar was standing next to the monitor, looking at everyone gathered.

He completely ignored Utarz and Repora.

Utarz, however, said, "So what's the deal? What's so important that this has to come before breakfast?"

"Simple." Atar said. "Did any of you hear a loud crash while you slept last night?"

Zen thought about it. "Now that you mention it sir, I did hear a faint sound that night."

Utarz snorted. "I was probably fast asleep at that point."

"Yeah, you could sleep through a bombing raid." Miara muttered.

"I never sleep!" Repora chirped. "I was building a new type of grenade when an explosion made me lose my concentration and break it."

"Which was probably best for all involved." Atar commented.

At this point, Tracer spoke up. "Me and Miara were in the vehicle bay when the crash sounded."

Utarz blinked, then leaned forward in his chair. "Hold up, hold up. You and **Miara?**"

Ignoring him, Tracer continued. "I immediately went to see the satellite imagery of the planet, to see what it was."

"How'd you manage to get that?" Zen asked.

"I had to promise that idiot who controls our radio a bag of drugs." Tracer grumbled. "Which reminds me; Repora, could you send a bag of your drugs to him?"

"No thank you." Repora replied. "I made that cocaine with my own hands. I'm not giving it to nobody."

Tracer sighed. "Anyway, the imagery showed this." Tracer pressed a button on the dashboard and an image came up on the screen.

It showed a purple pod that had brought up a lot of dirt as it slid across the land. It was smoking and appeared to be of Covenant origin.

"What's that?" Miara asked.

"I believe that it may be some form of escape pod." Tracer replied.

"From a ship?" Zen asked.

"Well what else could it come from?" Utarz asked belligerently.

Zen glared at him.

Wanting to prevent an argument, Tracer continued. "Yeah, it would probably come from a ship."

"Well, what's it doing here?" Miara asked. "Wouldn't a Covenant ship notify us if they were anywhere near our atmosphere?"

"I doubt they would want to waste their time with us." Tracer replied.

Zen really disliked the way he said that.

"So it's a mystery!" Repora said enthusiastically. "Let's go solve it!" He stood up.

"Slow down, mental patient." Atar growled.

"Okay." Repora started moving incredibly slowly.

"Stop altogether." Atar rephrased.

Repora stopped in the position he was in, which was somewhere in between sitting and standing.

"Don't any of you realise just how suspicious this is?" Atar questioned the room at large.

"Suspicious?" Utarz asked.

"Only yesterday, a squad of Heretics visited us and requested that Zen would join them." Atar explained. "And the very next day, a mysterious escape pod lands on our front doorstep."

"Actually, it's a few hundred galactic miles away from our base." Tracer corrected.

"Regardless! It's clearly a trap planted to trick us into exploring the thing! And then, when we least expect it, we'll be ambushed and killed as revenge for Zen refusing to join!"

"That's a little far-fetched sir." Zen said doubtfully. "They didn't seem to be the types who would engage in revenge."

"I partially agree with Atar." Tracer said. "It's too much of a coincidence. It's clearly orchestrated. That said, I doubt that it's a trap to kill us."

"Then what it can it be?" Miara asked.

"I don't know." Tracer said. "But I think that it's safe to say that we shouldn't investigate."

"I digress." Atar said. "I say we destroy the pod!"

Tracer blinked. "Destroy it? Why?"

"Because if we don't, then those Heretics will just use it again on some other poor, unsuspecting squad!" Atar replied. "We need to destroy it before anyone else can be harmed!"

Tracer thought about this. "Hmmâ€¦ that's actually pretty solid."

"Exactly!" Atar said, standing straight. "We will leave after breakfast!"

Utarz looked at Atar. "Wait, you mean we're actually gonna leave this Forerunner-forsaken base for once?"

"You better believe it, numb-nuts!" Atar announced. "We are going on our first mission ever today!"

Zen double blinked. An actual mission?

"Yay!" Repora jumped up. "I'll go get some stuff to go with! Utarz, make us breakfast!"

"I hate you." Utarz sighed, but got up anyway.

Miara pumped her hands into the air. "Woo! 'Bout time! I was eventually gonna go stir-crazy."

"I'll go get the Phantom ready." Tracer said. "Someone will need to tell me when breakfast's ready."

"Soldiers," Atar could barely contain his excitement. He was actually going to lead something of importance today. "Today, we save a generation."

* * *

><p>Breakfast was usually a mundane event, but today, it was a tad more exciting.<p>

"I mean, I know that we'll only be gone for a few days," Utarz was saying to Repora as he cooked. "But still, any time away from this freezing landfill will be welcome."

"Yeahâ€|" Repora sighed in disappointment. "But I won't be able to go on a rampage on the Phantom."

"All the better."

"Can I kill you now?" Repora asked hopefully.

"Do you want breakfast?" Utarz asked back.

"I guess so. What is for breakfast?"

"High fibre, high protein and low fat meals." Utarz replied. "You know, the stuff that we have _every single day?_"

Repora shuddered. "Uggh. I hate that stuff. It tastes like those sweat absorbing things. Can't we just have pancakes for once?"

Utarz turned and stared at Repora in confusion. "What the fuck are pancakes?"

Tracer, Miara and Zen, meanwhile, were having a conversation at the table, drinking a type of coffee.

"I'm just saying that it's not much of a mission." Zen said. "All we're doing is going out to destroy an escape pod a few days from here. It's notâ€| you knowâ€| extravagant."

"Yeah, but it's the closest thing we have to a mission." Miara said, taking another sip of coffee and cringing. "By the gods, this stuff is disgusting."

"Besides, it'll be transitioning into summer in a day or two." Tracer said. "It'll be a good time and place to see some scenery that doesn't consist of frost and snow. And it could be for the good of the Covenant."

"Yeahâ€|" Zen sighed. "I don't see why Atar insists on taking our weapons."

Tracer shrugged. "Atar's a bit paranoid when it comes to that. Probably caused by the fall off of the cliff."

"Huh?"

"It's how he got brain damaged."

"Ah."

"Hey, Miara!" Utarz called from the kitchen. "I could use a hand in here!"

Miara got up and walked to the kitchen. She glared at Utarz and asked, "What?"

"I need to talk to you." Utarz replied, although never taking his eyes off of his cooking.

"No, you don't." Miara replied flatly. "I know what you're going to talk about and I'm not going to talk about it."

"Hey, I am your older brother!" Utarz snapped. "It's my job to--"

"To what?" Miara asked. "Control my life? Because I think you'll find that that's not in your job description!" And with that, Miara marched out.

Utarz grumbled a bit as he finished up the cooking. He grabbed a ladle and spooned the mixture into six different bowls. He then slid the first one to Repora.

"Soâ€¦ no pancakes?" Repora asked depressingly.

"Dude, I don't know what those are." Utarz replied, picking up a bowl of his own. "How can I make something if I don't know what it is?"

"Duh! Look it up on the internet!"

Getting slightly annoyed, Utarz asked irritably, "Right. What's the internet?"

* * *

><p>February 2550 (Human Calender)

0357 Hours

SSMB 800

* * *

><p>It took a while to load everything onto the Phantom.<p>

"Utarz!" Atar shouted. "Are the packaged rations on board?"

"Yes, Atar!" Utarz shouted back.

"General or sir!" Atar shouted back again. Then he turned to Tracer and asked, "Tracer, is the Phantom ready for take-off?"

"More or less, sir." Tracer said. "But we'll need constant repairs if we seriously want to get to the crash site in this piece of crap."

"So be it. Do you have a repair kit on board?"

"Yes sir."

"Good." Atar then addressed the squad at large. "Everyone have their weapons?"

"Yes sir." They chorused.

"Yes, Atar." Utarz called down from the Phantom.

Atar closed his eyes and counted to ten.

He opened his eyes again and said to Repora, "Repora! Are the explosives on board?"

"Yup!" Repora said happily.

"Will they be able to destroy the pod?"

"Double yup! These things could rip apart a Forerunner construction!"

"There'll be no need for that." Atar said hastily. "Just the escape pod."

"Okay!" Repora skipped to the Phantom. "We going now?"

"Yeah, we're leaving." Atar confirmed. "Everyone on board!"

"Yes sir." Everyone walked to the Phantom and hopped on.

Tracer immediately manned the controls. He pressed a few buttons and the Phantom sprang to life. In its own sort of way.

It took a while for the thing to get into the air. And then it started moving towards the crash site at a very slow pace.

"Can't this thing go any faster?" Utarz complained.

"Guess." Was Tracer's reply.

Meanwhile, back at the base, a small, invisible being had been watching them speak amongst themselves as they talked. He had watched them leave in their Phantom and the first thing that he said once they had left was probably what anyone in his situation would say.

"Shit." Buzzsaw grumbled. "Iro, are you getting this?"

"Yes. Congratulations, Buzzsaw." Iro said angrily from the radio. "This is your fault!"

"Hey, I made a mistake, alright?!" Buzzsaw snapped. "It wouldn't have made any difference if it had landed in the middle of their base!"

"Well, we'll never know. BECAUSE OF WHAT YOU DID!"

"Fighting solves nothing!" Tank shouted in the background. "What do we do?"

"Well, we obviously can't let them destroy the artefact." Iro grumbled. "Those idiots don't know what they're trying to destroy."

"That's a no-brainer." Buzzsaw said. "The white guy said that his explosives can rip through stuff made by Forerunners."

"Wonderful." Iro muttered darkly. "We'll have to get there before them. Our Phantom is much more efficient than theirs, so it should be easier."

"So we can't go for this kind of approach again, huh?"

"No. They won't fall for it a second time. We might be able to convince them of the truth on the way to the artefact, but seeing as that's very unlikely, our main priority should be getting the artefact so we can convince others of the truth."

"Will we attack them?" Tank asked.

"Only if they attack us." Iro replied. "If we find ourselves in those situations, then we should take prisoners to slow them down."

"But no killing?"

"No killing." Iro agreed. "It would be incredibly dishonourable to kill someone who can't defend him or herself."

"You really are a good and proper Sangheili, aren't you Iro?" Buzzsaw grumbled as he walked back to his Banshee.

"Well, no shit."

* * *

><p>Author's Notes

So this is a bit of a short chapter, but I've said everything I need to say here. This is just to add words to the chapter.

Thanks for watching.

Potato.

8. Technical Difficulties

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* * *

><p>The Sangheili 800 Squad

Chapter 7: Technical Difficulties

* * *

><p>February 2550 (Human Calender)

****0903 Hours****

****Frozen Forest****

* * *

><p>"Are we there yet?" Utarz groaned.<p>

"Guess." Tracer replied non-committedly.

"We are?!" Utarz sat up straight.

Tracer turned to him and snapped, "I said, _guess_!"

"Oh." Utarz slumped back into his seat.

The 800 Squad had been travelling over a forest that was covered in slowly melting ice for about two or three hours. Everyone had been bored for quite a while.

Zen was bored and worried. Every now and then, the Phantom would make odd creaking noises that made Zen anxious at the least. The lights would occasionally flicker on and off, which annoyed everyone on board. On top of that, they were moving so incredibly slowly for a Phantom that Zen wondered whether the Wraith they were taking with them was acting as a weight.

He asked Tracer about it, to which Tracer replied, "Probably. But I mostly blame the poor state the Phantom's in."

As if to prove his point, the Phantom's lights suddenly switched off and the Phantom went into an alarming dive. Then, it suddenly righted itself again. Except the lights stayed off.

"Oh, by the Prophets." Tracer cursed.

"What's going on?" Miara asked from the back.

"The anti-gravity engine ran out of power." Tracer explained. "So it automatically redirected the power from the lights to the engine."

"Is that good?" Atar questioned.

"Not really. Not a lot of power goes into the lights. We'll have to land so I can make some repairs."

"Already?" Zen said incredulously.

"Yup. Already."

Atar grumbled. "Very well— let's land this thing."

Tracer quickly found a suitable clearing and directed the Phantom to it. Once the Phantom landed, the doors opened.

Actually, a more accurate term would be that they ****fell off****.

"Well, at least we've got light." Repora said

optimistically.

"Wonderful." Tracer stood up in a seriously annoyed manner. "We wouldn't have to do this if we just left a few days later."

"The sooner we destroy the escape pod, the better." Atar argued.

Tracer just grumbled something under his breath and got out his toolbox. "Repora, can you get me a plasma core?"

"Nope!" Repora said happily. "I'm going to kill Utarz!"

Immediately, Utarz's tiredness disappeared.

"Whoa, whoa, **whoa**." Utarz backed away from Repora. "Hold up. I don't have my Ghost with me, remember? It wouldn't be fair."

"Soâ€¦ go get your Ghost." Repora said.

"Dude, that thing is all the way back at the base!" Utarz said before realising something. "Which isn't all that far awayâ€¦"

Which was true. Despite the three hours they had been travelling, the base was merely twenty minutes away.

"Something else to improve." Tracer sighed, staring at the Phantom's boosters.

"Exactly!" Repora said. "So go get it!"

"Butâ€¦ I have no way to get it out of the canyonâ€¦" Utarz tried.

"Repora'll find a way." Atar said. "Go get your vehicle, numb-nuts."

"What?! But-?!"

"NOW."

"Let's go!" Repora grabbed Utarz arm and dragged him away.

Once they were gone, Miara turned to Atar and asked, "Uhâ€¦ why did you do that?"

"Because we might need a high-speed vehicle to use in a battle or something." Atar replied. "Unlikely, I know, butâ€¦ just in case."

"But if they get the Ghost, then Repora will go on a rampage." Zen pointed out. "And there's no bomb shelter here."

Atar registered this.

"Fuck." He said.

"Yeah, that plan was a bit flawed sir." Tracer called out from underneath the Phantom. "No offense meant."

"Rightâ€¦" Atar started to think. "Then we'll just have to find some reason to stop Repora from going on a rampage. Zen! Scout the area. Find something. I don't care what it is; just find something to divert us!"

"Yes sir." Zen said dutifully, although he was a bit annoyed. He walked off into the woods.

"Right." Atar sat down in the snow. "For now, we wait."

Miara went over to Tracer and sat down next to him. "Need any help?"

"Not at the moment." Tracer replied. "But you didn't come over here to help, didn't you?"

"No." Miara admitted. "Just to talk."

"About?"

"Stuff." Miara replied. "When people talk, they don't always have something in mind to talk about."

Tracer would've smiled at her if he was human. "Well then. Let's talk."

* * *

><p>"Dude, seriously." Utarz grumbled. "We just left the place. Do we really have to go back?"<p>

"Do you want your Ghost?" Repora questioned.

"Not really." Utarz replied. "If I get it, then you'll just kill me, won't you?"

"Well, I'll certainly try. Hey look, we're here!"

And so they were.

"Great." Utarz mumbled. "So how're we going to get my Ghost?"

"Leave that to me." Repora said kindly. "Now get down there."

"Can't you do it?"

"No."

"Look, let's be reasonable here. You could probably survive a fall from this height. I couldn't."

Repora pulled a backpack-like item out of nowhere. He gave it to Utarz. "Here, put this on."

Utarz did, although something confused him. "Where did you get this from?"

Ignoring him, Repora continued. "Now, when I push you off the cliff, pull the strap thing."

"Okayâ€¦ wait, what do you mean by-"

Repora interrupted him by shoving him off the edge.

Utarz yelled in terror for five seconds before realising what Repora said. Quickly, he pulled the strap and a parachute suddenly expanded from the pack.

"Made it down okay?" Repora shouted down.

"FUCK YOU!" Utarz raged up at him.

Repora chuckled.

POOF

"You know, you could've just ended it right there and then." Hell pointed out.

"By shoving him off a cliff with no parachute?" Repora scoffed.
"Where's the honour in that?"

"Screw honour!" Hell snapped. "Do you want to kill him or not?!"

Repora waved a hand through Hell, causing him to disappear.

Utarz, meanwhile, walked through the base until he got to the vehicle bay. When he got there, he immediately searched for the familiar, small purple vehicle.

"There you are." Utarz said happily when he found it. "Come to papa."

Utarz hopped on the Ghost, grabbing the controls and sitting in the familiar seat. He admired the thing. Ever since Tracer gave the Ghost to him, Utarz had loved it. To him, it was more than a getaway vehicle from Repora. It was a living thing that deserved treatment fit for royalty.

In a way that where he knew that it was an inanimate object.

Utarz activated the Ghost, the anti-grav engine kicking in and causing the Ghost to rise. Utarz then drove the Ghost over to where he landed. He looked up and yelled, "Okay, I'm ready to come up now!"

"Alright!" Repora replied.

And then a crane arm lowered down.

Utarz did a double take. "Wha- WHAT?! Is that a crane?! Where did you get a crane?!"

Utarz received no response. Completely befuddled, but willing to go along with it, Utarz allowed the crane to pick up his Ghost.

As he was rising, Utarz heard an odd noise. Guessing that the noise didn't mean anything good, Utarz got out his Plasma Rifle and waited.

Sure enough, when he got to the top, Repora was waiting with a shotgun pointing at Utarz.

"I'm afraid that you aren't going to be able to use that Ghost for much longer." Repora said.

"Really dude?" Utarz asked.

"Yup. You have your Ghost now, right? That was the deal: you get your Ghost, I get to kill you. So, it's time for my end of the deal."

"You're going to kill me in cold blood." Utarz said, thinking quickly. "There's no honour in that."

"What do you know about honour?" Repora asked. "Besides, you're holding a gun, so it's not really in cold blood."

Fuck. Utarz quickly thought of something to stop Repora. "Look, it's not really fair, because, I'm in a crane. I can't move. It's much better to chase me, isn't it?"

"Wellâ€¦"

"Look, just don't be a dick, alright? Let me go and you can kill me once we get back to the others, okay?"

Repora thought about it.

Don't do it Repora. I need to continue the story, and you won't help by killing off one of the main characters.

Repora sighed and threw the shotgun over his shoulder. "Fine. But once we get to the others, then you die, okay?"

"Yeah, sure." Utarz agreed. "Can you get me off of this thing now?"

* * *

><p>A red alarm filled the Phantom that the Heretics were travelling in.<p>

"What is it?" Iro asked Buzzsaw, who was piloting the controls.

"Out of fuel." Buzzsaw replied. "I told you that we should've filled up before we left!"

Iro sighed. "Just land the Phantom somewhere so we can refuel."

"On it."

Buzzsaw moved the Phantom towards a small clearing. Once he landed the thing, the doors opened up and all three climbed out.

Buzzsaw got a large plasma core and plugged it into the Phantom. Immediately, the Phantom began to glow as the power seeped into it.

"Any idea where we are, Tank?" Iro asked.

Tank pulled out a GPS-like device and looked at it. "Far from artefact. Is a long way ahead."

"Great." Iro muttered. "And we're stuck here."

"Because you said 'Don't worry, we don't need to refuel.'" Buzzsaw said mockingly. "'We'll be fine, don't bother about it.'"

Iro growled at Buzzsaw in a threatening manner.

Tank moved the map a bit to see what else was around them. "800 Squad ship is close by."

"How close?" Iro queried.

"Close enough for them to walk towards us in two minutes." Tank replied.

"Are they in the same position we are?"

"Similar." Tank replied. "Purple one appears to be repairing."

"Good." Iro said satisfactorily. "So they're not going anywhere soon either."

"Affirmative."

"You said they could get to us in two minutes." Buzzsaw said worryingly. "What's to stop them from attacking us?"

"First, they would have to know where we are." Iro said.

"Right. So what's stopping one of them from spying on us?"

"Nothing."

"And you're okay with that?"

Iro scoffed. "They're rejects, remember? Rejects are sloppy, useless, unworthy soldiers whoâ€¦"

"No." Tank said suddenly. "Atar is not."

Iro and Buzzsaw stared at him.

Tank offered no explanation.

"â€¦Anywayâ€¦" Iro turned back to Buzzsaw. "They're not good soldiers. I honestly doubt they'd be able to do much against us."

"Uh, huh." Buzzsaw wasn't convinced. "What about that white guy?"

Iro turned to Tank. "Well? What about the white guy?"

Tank hesitated. "Repora isâ€¦ special."

"Meaning?"

"â€¦"

Buzzsaw shrugged. "Well, if you honestly insist on doing nothing about them, then I won't stop you. But if we all die, then it's your fault, alright?"

Iro shrugged. "Very well. How much power does the Phantom have?"

Buzzsaw went to go and check. He looked at a gauge and said, "Ehâ€¦ about thirty-five percent full."

"Good. All we have to do now is wait." Iro said, going back inside the Phantom to sit down.

Tank grunted and looked at his arm. It shifted again, as if it wanted to become something else. But it didn't.

Tank growled in frustration.

"Just give up." Buzzsaw said. "Wait for Gears to come back and then we can fix it."

Silently, Tank trudged back into the Phantom.

And meanwhile, Zen put down his rifle and thought about how convenient this was.

* * *

><p>Tracer had to agree that Utarz's past history was incredibly amusing.<p>

"A whole box of them." He said in disbelief. "All up his nostrils."

"Yup." Miara chuckled. "Those were the days."

"Gods above." Tracer muttered, readjusting one of the Phantom's thrusters. "And I thought he was stupid now."

"Yeahâ€¦ well, there's a difference between child stupidity and adult stupidity."

"Trueâ€¦" Tracer agreed. "You know, I have a theory about Utarz's behaviour."

"Really?" Miara asked. "Because I thought it was pretty straightforward."

"No-one goes into the depths of dishonour like Utarz has gone into for no good reason." Tracer explained. "He'd need a reason."

Slightly annoyed, Miara said, "His reason is that he's a dick. Always has been."

"That's not what I meant." Tracer responded. "I meant an event of some sorts."

"Like what?"

"I don't know. But anyway, it's just a theory."

Miara grumbled, but she kept Tracer's theory in mind.

Then she heard a familiar engine whirr.

"Speak of the devil." She said, watching as Utarz burst into the clearing on his Ghost.

"Finally back, eh?" Atar asked. "Where's Repora?"

"Some few metres back." Utarz replied. "Hey, uh, Atar"

"General, or sir."

"Whatever. Could you do me a favour?"

Atar snorted. "Right. Me doing you a favour. It goes the other way round, Utarz. Look at the chain of command."

"Okay, look." Utarz sounded desperate. "You don't want Repora to go on a rampage and neither do I. I don't have the same space I did when I was at the base. Once he gets here, he's gonna try and do it, so I really- What're you two doing over there?" Utarz suddenly noticed Tracer and Miara.

"Sitting together, genius. What does it look like?" Miara asked.

"Uh just that I guess but still-"

"As an answer to your request," Atar interrupted. "Zen went out looking for a reason to stall for time, so we have to wait for him to come back."

"Too late." Repora said cheerfully.

Everyone froze when they heard Repora's voice.

"Oh, Utarz?" Repora said in a singsong voice before going into dead seriousness. "Prepare to die."

"Hey, look, Repora?" Utarz said nervously as the Fuel Rod Gun came up to his face. "We kinda have a mission if you blow me up, then"

"I'll what, jeopardize the mission?" Repora asked rhetorically. "I honestly doubt that you'd contribute to any part of it, so I see this as a win-win."

"Actually, you'd probably kill everyone else as well." Tracer pointed out. "Due to the confined space we're in."

"Not everyone." Repora said. "I've survived worse."

At this point, Zen walked into the clearing.

"Whoa." He stopped. "What's going on?"

"Hi Zen!" Repora said happily. "I'm going to kill Utarz!"

"â€|Yeahâ€|" Zen decided that now wasn't the time for this. "You're going to put that dream on hold."

"Awâ€|" Repora put down his gun.

"THANK you." Utarz said.

Ignoring him, Zen turned to Atar. "We've got a problem. The Heretics have landed near us."

Atar straightened up immediately. "They have?! Why?"

"They ran out of fuel."

"Seriously?" Tracer asked.

"Yeah. But they won't be empty for long."

Atar growled. "They're no doubt here for the escape pod."

"They called it an 'artefact'."

"How is an escape pod an artefact?" Utarz asked.

"The artefact in question is no doubt inside the pod, moron!" Atar snapped. "We must get there before they do!"

Zen looked at the Phantom. "Uhâ€| their Phantom is in better shape than ours is thoughâ€| it'll be difficult to go faster than them."

"Tracer!" Atar said. "How soon until the thrusters are fully repaired?"

Tracer stared at him. "Sirâ€| with all due respect, it's taken me about forty minutes to re-install a power core. I highly doubt I can fully repair the thrusters in any convenient measure of time."

Atar quickly thought up another plan. "Very well then. We'll just have to attack them!"

"Attack them?!" Miara looked at Atar as if he had just suggested that they make Utarz the leader.

Utarz, meanwhile, just said, "Right. That's it. I'm out. I'm quitting the army."

"No-can do, jackass." Atar replied. "We need you to drive the Ghost."

"Uh, sir?" Zen started.

"I know that you're low in confidence, but I think we can do this." Atar butted in.

"Sir, it's just thatâ€¦" Tracer quickly thought up an excuse. "We're rejects, you know? We're lousy and we can't do anything right. Our previous training exercises should prove that."

"You sound a lot like Iro, you know that?" Zen said.

Tracer glared at him. "You're not helping."

"Listen, they're a group of three, remember?" Atar insisted. "We're a group of six. Last time I checked, that gave that advantage two-to-one! Plus, we have Repora on our side."

Everyone turned to look at Repora.

"I like bathing in blood." Repora said cheerfully.

"Exactly!" Atar said. "Er, wait, what?"

"I like bathing in blood!" Repora repeated. "It does wonderful things for your skin complexion. You should try it someday!"

Now everyone stared at Repora.

"I'm not convinced that this is a good idea." Tracer stated.

"I dunno." Utarz said thoughtfully. "Atar has a point."

"What?!"

"Think about it. Repora can defy physics in the most mind-fuckingly way possible. I'm sure that if he put his mind to it, he could make bullets go through him."

Tracer growled in frustration. "Utarz, that's impossible and you know it."

"Dude." Utarz deadpanned. "Repora teleported to the top of the sentry tower to snipe at me once. When Zen shot him through the head, nothing happened to him. Twenty minutes ago, Repora pulled a crane out of his ass to pull me up from the base. If you can explain that to me in a logical way, _then _I'll believe that we have no chance."

Tracer wasn't sure what to be more amazed at, the fact that all of what Utarz just said was true, or the fact that Utarz of all people was agreeing with Atar.

"Then it's settled!" Atar said happily. "We'll attack them as soon as possible to delay them. But first we'll need a plan."

Miara sighed. She supposed that she may as well go along with this. After all, there was no real way out of it. "I suggest that we divide our resources."

"As in, split up?" Repora asked.

"That's a perfect idea!" Atar said. "That way, we can attack all three of them at once and we won't have to worry about any of them sneaking up on us and stabbing us in the back!"

"I dunno if that term applies here sir." Tracer said.

"Shut it. Now, here's the plan:" Atar quickly began formulating something in his mind.

"First, we'll need to attack Tank. That way, we'll take out the most dangerous of the bunch. For this, me, Repora and Miara will take him on."

"Me?!" Miara exclaimed, alarmed. "Why me?"

"Because you can set him alight, of course! What better way to defeat an enemy than with fire?"

She and Tracer looked at each other and Miara suddenly realised that she hadn't told anyone except Tracer about her flamethrower issues.

"But-" Miara started.

"Then, Utarz will attack Buzzsaw while we're engaging Tank." Atar interrupted.

"Which one is Buzzsaw again?" Utarz asked.

"The Grunt."

"Oh." Utarz snorted. "That'll be easy."

"Then, Zen and Tracer will engage Iro."

"Us?" Zen and Tracer asked simultaneously.

"Affirmative. Hopefully, two Sangheili against one will be enough to overpower him."

"Very well, sirâ€|"

"Yes sir."

"Good. Now, Repora." Atar turned to said Sangheili.

"Yeah?"

"Your role will be very important. If things start to go down the drain, then you will sneak to the Heretic's Phantom and place an explosive on it."

"What kind of explosive?" Repora asked pleasantly, pulling out a bunch of different bomb-like objects. "I've got plasma grenades, frag grenades, C4, C12, Nuclear Bombs, Sticky Bombsâ€|"

"I don't really care what kind you use." Atar told him. "Just something that they won't notice and something that'll put a dent in their craft."

"C12 it is then!" Repora said happily, pulling out a brown package and throwing everything else away.

"Right!" Atar turned towards the Heretic location. "Sangheili 800 Squad! Today, we make history regret our placement here! Move out!" And with that, he marched off.

"Other way, sir." Zen pointed out.

* * *

><p>Author's notes

Okay, so the next chapter will have some action and conflict in it. Everyone okay with that?

Too bad, you don't have a say in the matter.

Thanks for watching.

Potato.

9. For Victory

The Halo Universe belongs to Microsoft Studios and 343 Industries. But these characters are my own creation and cannot be used without my permission. If you do use them without my permission, then Iro will beat you senseless so that you will never be able to dance like Michael Jackson ever again. Enjoy the show.

* * *

><p>The Sangheili 800 Squad

Chapter 8: For **Victory**

* * *

><p>"Buzzsaw." Iro asked as he strode up to him. "How's the fuel going?"<p>

Buzzsaw eyed a little gauge on the canister. "Ehâ€| about eight-three percent done. We should be able to get out of here in a small while."

"Good." Iro walked away.

Buzzsaw sighed and sat down. "So that's my use now? Great."

Tank looked at him. "You look bored."

"No kidding. I've been sitting here watching a little needle on a gauge move up every so often. That's not exactly Thrillville."

"Why don't you take walk?" Tank asked. "Tank will watch gauge."

"You sure?" Buzzsaw asked. "This is extremely boring."

"Story of Tank's life." Tank responded. "You can go."

"Thank you." Buzzsaw stood up and walked off in the opposite direction Iro went.

This meant that Tank was now alone in the clearing.

Behind the trees, Atar looked at his gathered squad.

"This is our chance!" He said excitedly. "They're all separated!"

"About time." Utarz muttered. "We've been standing around here for too long."

"Yeah, about thatâ€¦" Zen thought of something. "Why haven't we been spotted yet?"

"Who cares?" Atar hissed. "We have to attack now, or we won't be attacking at all! Now get going!"

Tracer and Zen walked off in the direction Iro went. Utarz grudgingly got on his Ghost and zoomed off after Buzzsaw. Repora, Atar and Miara didn't move.

Miara glanced nervously at her flamethrower, then at Atar. "Sir, there's something I should tell youâ€¦"

"Save it." Atar interrupted. "We need to be quiet and stealthy."

Miara nodded and glanced at her flamethrower again, silently praying to the Forerunners, _Please let this old thing work. I'm begging you._

"Now remember," Atar whispered as they exited from the trees. "Hunters are weak on their backs. So aim for his behind, alright?"

Miara nodded, still looking at her weapon.

Repora, however, tapped Atar on the shoulder. "Uh, sir? I think they already thought of that."

Atar looked at Tank. His back had a massive metal plate on it. It looked like the metal that the Forerunners used, except without any blue markings.

Miara looked horrified that the Heretics would dare to pull a sheet of metal out of a Forerunner object.

Atar, however, looked impressed and annoyed. "They're definitely not us, that's for sure."

"Soâ€¦" Repora whispered. "What now?"

"We'll go with what most armies usually do." Atar muttered. "ATTACK!"

Both Miara and Repora took this as the signal to charge.

Tank was a bit slow on the uptake. He didn't turn around immediately and while he did, Atar had already fired a shot at him.

Tank stumbled and brought up his shield. Relentlessly, Atar and Repora fired shot after shot while Miara stood offside, looking more nervous than ever.

Tank activated his radio and roared, "Iro! Tank is under attack!"

There was a slight pause before Iro quickly said, "Defend yourself Tank! Attack them if you must but do not kill them!"

"Yes Iro!" Tank obeyed, holding his shield up a bit more. He turned and pointed his cannon hand at them. He fired a few blasts, although not directly at them.

Atar and Repora easily dodged the blasts, although it didn't escape their attention that they weren't really doing anything to Tank. Atar was slightly more bothered by it than Repora.

"This is fun!" Repora shouted gleefully. "When can we do this again?"

Atar turned to Miara and shouted, "What're you doing? Get in there while we're distracting him!"

"But sir-!" Miara started to protest.

"That's an order!"

"I- Yes, sir!" Miara ran towards Tank's side.

Once she was there, she looked desperately at her flamethrower and prayed to the Forerunners again that it would work.

She pulled the trigger.

The Forerunners appeared to be mad at her for some reason though, because nothing happened.

"Oh, come on!" Miara begged.

"Miara!" Atar shouted. "What's going on over there?"

"My flamethrower!" She cried out, accidentally alerting Tank to her presence. "It won't work!"

"It won't WHAT?!"

Any reply that Miara could've come up with was interrupted by Tank hitting her with his shield.

As you can imagine, Miara was distracted and not prepared for a giant piece of metal hitting her in the face, so she immediately fell backwards. As fate would so unfairly have it, she also hit her head on the Heretic's Phantom in the process. As such, by the time she hit the ground, she was unconscious.

"_Uh oh._" Atar thought. He had actually been counting on Miara's

flamethrower to distract Tank so that he and Repora could actually do some damage.

Repora stopped firing when he saw that Miara wasn't moving. "Uhâ€¦ I think we may need a bit of backup."

"Agreed." Atar growled. He activated his commlink and continued to fire at Tank. "Computer! Call Utarz!"

"_Did you say, 'call you arse'?" _An electronic voice asked.

"Callâ€¦ Utarz!" Atar said loudly and clearly.

"_Calling 'Utarz'. Is this correct?"_

"Yes!"

"_Available options areâ€¦"_

"Oh, for the love of the gods." Atar muttered. "Why do we have to use this ancient technology? YES!" Atar yelled when given the option.

"_Callingâ€¦"_

Tank fired a few more shots, all the while negating most, if not all, of the damage the projectiles would've inflicted otherwise. Repora was moving left and right, covering Atar while he dealt with the frustrating radio issues.

Finally, Utarz's voice came up on the other side. "Yes?! Can I help you?!"

"Utarz!" Atar snapped. "We're not going so well against Tank and Miara is down. We need you here on the double!"

"Miara's down?! What the fuck does that mean?!"

"It means that she can't fight, idiot! Now get over here!"

Atar heard some sort of whirring sound on the other side. Utarz quickly said, "I'm kinda busy here, Atar!"

"General or sir! And are you seriously telling me that you are unable to take care of a single Grunt?!"

"Said Grunt isn't as stupid as the rest of them! This guy's got a freakin-" There was a sudden noise, followed by Utarz cursing, "Holy shit!" Then there was nothing.

"Utarz! Do you copy?! Utarz?! Ah, shoot!" Atar snarled. "Right. We'll go for Zen and Tracer then. Computer! Call Tracer!"

"_Did you say, 'Call Tracer'?"_

"Yes!"

"_Calling Tracer. Is this correct?"_

"Yes!"

"_Callingâ€|"_"

Atar, while he was waiting, fired a few more shots at Tank, who had decided to slowly advance. Repora found that he had run out of ammo for the Fuel Rod Gun, so he pulled a grenade launcher out of his arse and continued firing, much to Tank's surprise.

"_I'm sorry." _The computer apologised. _"Your target is currently unable to respond to your call. Please hang up and wait five minutes."_

"WHAT?!"

"Yeeeeeeeeeeeeaaaaaaahhhhhhhhâ€|" Repora stopped firing. "I know how this one will end. Gimme a moment." And then he ran off into the woods.

"Repora! Don't be a coward!" Atar yelled, firing more shots at Tank, who was nearing him now. Finding that he was out of ammo, Atar threw out the clip and reached for another one.

There wasn't one.

Tank was now directly in front of him. Atar looked at him defiantly and said very clearly, "You'll have to kill me to get rid of me."

"No." Tank rumbled. "Iro said not to."

"What?! It's dishonourable not to kill someone who attacks you!"

"But it is dishonourable to attack those who cannot defend themselves." Tank replied.

"I think I just demonstrated a good ability to defend myself." Atar growled.

"Still. Tank will not kill you."

"And why is that?!" Atar snapped.

"Tank would prefer not to say." Tank said. He swatted the concussion rifle out of Atar's hands. "All Atar needs to know is that we will not trouble you if you don't trouble us."

"That won't happen."

"So be it." Tank poked Atar in the head with his shield. He did so with enough force to knock him out.

BOOM

Tank stumbled from the blast. His metal plate allowed him to survive it, but he still felt the impact of a fuel rod exploding on his back.

"Yeah!" Repora closed in on him. "You felt that, didn't

you?!"

Deciding that Repora could probably survive next to anything, Tank swung around and bashed him with his shield.

Repora flew off to the side, hit the snow and didn't move.

* * *

><p>Utarz couldn't really believe he was going to kill something.<p>

In the sense that it was something as stupid as a Grunt.

Weaving around the trees, Utarz soon found the Grunt walking down a little path. It appeared to be talking to itself.

"â€|go on these walks more often. Gets me away from Iro. Honestly, sometimes I feel as if the guy takes me for granted."

"Well, that makes two of us." Utarz said, making the Grunt freeze. "Except I just feel underappreciated."

The Grunt turned around and looked at Utarz dead in the eye.

"Oh, come on!" It complained. "The one time I get some time off, I get ambushed! What kind of universe am I living in?!"

"I dunno, an unfair one I guess." Utarz said. "So how exactly do you want to die?"

"Preferably? I ****don't****. I would rather die a few years down the track than right now."

"Should've thought of that before you joined the army."

"Moron. Grunts don't get a choice when it comes to these matters. We join the army by command."

"Welp, that makes two of us."

The Grunt looked around. "Where're the rest of your team?"

"What do you mean?"

The Grunt smirked. "You didn't bring any other soldiers, didn't you?"

Utarz snorted. "Right. So you're telling me that I need help defeating a weakling Grunt?"

"Well, size isn't really a factor when it comes to skill." The Grunt replied, taking a step back and thrusting one of his arms forward.

Upon the arm thrust, a wrist-mounted device extended a rod with a sheet of triangles with jagged edges.

Then the triangles fanned out and flattened into a circular saw.

And then it started spinning.

"They don't call me 'Buzzsaw' for nothing." The Grunt explained.

Utarz stared at the saw. "Oh. Fuck."

Buzzsaw leaped forward.

With a yelp, Utarz steered the Ghost over to one side. Buzzsaw leaped again. Utarz dodged the saw. Buzzsaw leaped. Utarz dodged. Leap. Dodge.

"C'mon, Elite!" Buzzsaw mocked. "I thought you had some guns on that thing!"

Utarz blinked. "Oh! Right!" Utarz grabbed the controls for the gun.

Buzzsaw leapt forward and swung his saw. The guns fell off with a screech.

"â€|That was just cruel." Utarz said.

"It'll get worse." Buzzsaw promised. "Trust me."

Utarz decided to bolt. He spun the Ghost around and zoomed off.

Buzzsaw took aim and the saw fired off the pole and cut through the wing of the Ghost.

Utarz yelled as the Ghost suddenly spun out of control. Unable to stop the Ghost, Utarz jumped off and promptly hit his head on a tree.

Utarz stood up and clutched his head. "Owâ€| if this is how the Grunt is, I don't wanna see what the other two are like."

Buzzsaw pulled out a plasma pistol and started shooting at Utarz. Utarz yelled and ran into the trees.

Buzzsaw felt some static in his radio. "Buzzsaw! Do you hear me?"

"Loud and clear, Iro." Buzzsaw replied. "What's wrong?"

"Are you currently under attack?"

"Sort of. If you mean me kicking some Elite's arse as an attack, then yes."

"Right. Make sure that you don't kill him. Alright?"

"You sure?"

"Absolutely."

"Really? Because I'm sure I can beat him. Pretty sure it'd be a blessing to his teammates as well."

"I don't care! It'd be-" There was a gunshot from the other side. "I need to deal with these two. Just follow my orders!" The comm. switched off.

Buzzsaw shrugged. "Wellâ€¦ orders are orders."

Meanwhile, Utarz was getting a call as well.

Jumping in alarm, then realising that it was just a call, Utarz pressed a button on his helmet.

"Yes?!" Utarz snapped. "Can I help you?!"

"Utarz!" Atar's voice came up, along with a lot of shooting. "We're not going so well against Tank and Miara is down. We need you here on the double!"

Utarz eye's widened in alarm. "Miara's down?! What the fuck does that mean?!"

"It means that she can't fight, idiot! Now get over here!"

Utarz looked around the woods nervously. "I'm kinda busy here, Atar!"

"General or sir! And are you seriously telling me that you are unable to take care of a single Grunt?!"

"Said Grunt isn't as stupid as the rest of them! This guy's got a freakin-"

Buzzsaw suddenly burst out of the bushes, his saw reattached and whirring at top speed.

"Holy shit!" Utarz jumped back, letting go of his radio in the process. He grabbed his plasma rifle and pointed it at Buzzsaw. "Stay away! I mean it!"

"Forget something?" Buzzsaw pointed to his saw.

"Oh. Yeah." Utarz still pointed his gun at him.

"Oh, relax." Buzzsaw put away his weapon. "I've received strict orders not to kill you. So you don't have to worry about being cut in half."

"Oh." Utarz lowered his rifle slightly. "Soâ€¦ we're cool?"

"Not really." Buzzsaw replied. "I still got to stop you from helping your friends. So, you might experience some brief pain."

With that, Buzzsaw pressed a button on his chest armour and he went invisible.

Utarz froze. It suddenly occurred to him that Buzzsaw could strike from anywhere. He spun around, looking everywhere. "Not cool man. Not cool at all. Show yourself."

Suddenly, his legs were swept from underneath him and he fell to the

ground. Before he could get back up, something grabbed his face and smashed his head into the ground. As such, he was unconscious.

Buzzsaw reappeared, chuckling. "The old trick. You go invisible, but you don't move at all. Sucker never knew what hit him."

Of course, Utarz would know what hit him the moment he woke up.

And in hindsight, he realised what a stupid idea it was to talk normally into the radio.

* * *

><p>Iro sighed as he walked along the path. If anyone had asked him, he didn't really want to be a leader. He was much more comfortable with following orders rather than giving them.<p>

But, no-one else could do it. Buzzsaw would probably ruin the team if he was in charge. Tank made it clear that he wanted Iro to lead. Gears fancied himself as more of an engineer than a leader. So Iro was in charge.

Iro looked around and sat on a log. He didn't usually get chances to relax like this. He usually spent time trying to find some more recruits. That said, he hasn't succeeded yet. Zen was probably the best Sangheili who could've joined. And now he was against him.

Iro heard some static on his headset. He pressed the button on the side of his helmet.

"Iro!" Tank's voice came out from the other side. "Tank is under attack!"

Iro blinked. Attack?

Reacting quickly, Iro ordered, "Defend yourself Tank! Attack them if you must, but do not kill them!"

"Yes Iro!" Tank's voice cut out.

Iro reached for his weapon, a human pistol. He had stolen it from a dead body back when he used to work for the Covenant and had kept it as a trophy. Now, he kept it as a reminder as to what he was fighting for.

He headed back to Tank's last position, activating his radio and selecting Buzzsaw's headset.

"Buzzsaw!" He said. "Do you hear me?"

"Loud and clear." Came the reply. "What's wrong?"

"Are you currently under attack?"

"Sort of. If you mean me kicking some Elite's arse as an attack, then yes."

"Right." Iro said. "Make sure that you don't kill him. Alright?"

"You sure?"

"Absolutely."

"Really? Because I'm sure I can beat him. Pretty sure it'd be a blessing to his teammates as well."

"I don't care!" Iro snapped. "It'd be--"

BLAM

A Carbine round zoomed past Iro's head. He jumped to the side and spun around. There were two Sangheili behind him. One was in purple armour and the other was in green armour.

"I need to deal with these two." Iro growled into his radio. "Just follow my orders!"

"How did you miss him?!" Zen snapped, taking aim with his Needle Rifle.

"I'm nervous, okay?!" Tracer snapped back.

Iro put away his pistol, saying, "Before we start this, I want it known that I won't kill you two."

"Your mistake." Zen said coldly, shooting Iro in the face.

Immediately, Iro's energy shield flared up, negating the damage of the round.

"Are you kidding me?!" Zen complained.

Iro suddenly rushed forward and punched Tracer in the face, immediately knocking him out.

Zen jumped backwards and tried to fire again. However, Iro grabbed the barrel of the rifle and aimed it towards a tree, stopping Zen from shooting him. He then yanked the gun away from him and used it to smash it into his face.

Zen stumbled backwards and took a fighting stance. Iro threw the gun away and pressed a button on his headset. Then, he rushed forward and threw a punch at Zen.

Zen dodged it and kicked Iro in the stomach. Iro stumbled back from the unexpected blow.

Iro glanced at Zen. "Impressive."

"I don't need praise from someone like you." Zen snapped. He launched forward.

Iro deflected the punch and looked at Zen. "That said, I fear that you aren't quite up to my level."

Iro kicked him in the stomach, knocking him back. Zen looked up at him and growled, "Don't underestimate me."

Despite Zen's best efforts, he couldn't get Iro at a disadvantage. He managed to get land a few blows, but Iro would just give him a few blows back. It was like Iro knew what Zen was going to do.

Zen had no idea who taught Iro how to fight like this, but suddenly, he wanted his teacher.

As the fight dragged on for a few more minutes, Zen backed off. So did Iro.

Zen looked at his gun, which was a few metres away. If he could only distract Iro long enough to grab itâ€¦

Suddenly, an invisible force slammed into his side. Zen stumbled back and tried to find the invisible force. As he backed away, he collided with something large.

"Tank?" He guessed.

Tank grunted in confirmation.

Zen backed off and found himself surrounded as Tank and Iro advanced in front and Buzzsaw materialised next to them.

"Seriously?" Buzzsaw asked. "You're still dealing with this guy?"

"He's a much better fighter than anyone I've ever met." Iro said. "Almost like an aristocrat."

"I take it that you guys took care of my squad." Zen said, inwardly disappointed, yet not surprised.

Tank nodded. "The ones Tank fought had fought with honour. Except white one."

"Really?" Buzzsaw seemed surprised. "The one I fought was a complete idiot."

"So why won't you kill me?" Zen asked aggressively. "I've made clear the side I'm on."

"You're part of a squad of rejects." Iro explained. "We're not. It wouldn't be fair."

"We'll just do this again."

Iro picked up the Needle Rifle. "Well. You'd need to improve if you want to stand a chance." And with that, he slammed the butt of the rifle into Zen's face, knocking him out.

He crumpled to the ground.

"Do we move them?" Tank asked.

"No. We're wasting time." Iro said. "We need to get to the artefact before them."

"That ought to be easy." Buzzsaw said. "I mean, the Phantom should be

fuelled up and ready to go by now."

"Then let's go."

The group walked back to the clearing where they parked their Phantom. Three unconscious bodies were lying there, unmoving.

"You sure they're still alive, Tank?" Buzzsaw asked.

"Yes." Tank confirmed.

Iro looked at the meter showing how full the Phantom was of fuel.

It read as 97%.

Iro shrugged. "Close enough."

They boarded the Phantom. Tank went and sat in a corner while Buzzsaw took the flight controls. Iro sat down and waited to leave.

The Phantom slowly rose from the ground, then started moving towards where the escape pod landed.

When the Phantom was out of sight from the clearing, a prone, white figure suddenly sat up.

Repora looked as the Phantom disappeared over the trees. Satisfied, he pulled out a plastic stick with a button on its top. He pressed the button with enthusiasm.

Nothing happened.

Repora somehow frowned, shook the detonator and pressed the button again.

This time, a huge explosion sounded in the not-to-far off distance, followed by a large crashing sound somewhere in the woods.

"Heh, heh, heh." Repora chuckled, getting a bottle of beer out of nowhere. "Suckers."

* * *

><p>Author's Notes

This was probably the easiest chapter to write, really. I dunno why.

Thanks for watching.

Potato.

10. Aftermath

The Halo Universe belongs to Microsoft Studios and 343 Industries. But these characters are my own creation and cannot be used without my permission. If you do use them without my permission, then Utarz will poison your food so that you die of internal bleeding. Enjoy the show.

* * *

><p>The Sangheili 800 Squad

****Chapter 9: Aftermath****

* * *

><p>February, 2550 (Human Calender)

****0729 Hours****

****Forest Clearing****

* * *

><p>The 800 Squad stood solemnly in the middle of the clearing, with Atar in front of them.<p>

Atar was currently struggling to find something to say to them.

Finally, he said, "Wellâ€¦ as you all know, last night wasâ€¦"

"A failure?" Tracer suggested.

"A mess-up?" Utarz added.

"A conflict?" Repora said.

"All those things and more." Atar said. "It showed that all of us, except Miara, need much more training before we can even think of attacking those guys again."

"Question." Zen started. "Why is Miara exempt from this?"

"Because Miara suffered from a genuine weapon malfunction." Atar explained. "You lot failed to take out your opponents becauseâ€¦ wellâ€¦"

"We suck." Miara said bluntly.

"Wellâ€¦ that's one way of putting it." Atar agreed.

"I don't think that's the case." Zen said.

Everyone turned and looked at him.

"Well, I think we failed because we underestimated these guys." Zen said.

"Underestimated?!" Utarz exclaimed. "The Grunt had a fucking SAW! How the hell was I supposed to predict that?!"

"Well, from how you explained the situation, you should've just shot the Grunt and got it over with." Zen said.

Utarz started to say something, then stopped.

"Zen has a point." Tracer agreed. "We all assumed that this would be an easy job, even for us. We should've at least prepared for basic military actions from them."

"Trueâ€|" Atar said. "Well, we won't make that mistake again! Everyone, let's state what those Heretics had on them and how we should prepare for that next time!"

"There's gonna be a 'next time'?" Utarz asked wearily.

"Yay!" Repora jumped in excitement. "I would love to kill them this time!"

POOF

"Tell them how you blew up their Phantom." Hell ordered. "Get some credit for once!"

"Now, now." Heaven said calmly. "There's no need to call attention to ourselves. Let's be modest."

"I blew up their Phantom!" Repora said happily.

Everyone turned to him.

"Goddammit Repora." Heaven muttered while Hell cackled.

"Oh, right!" Atar said, suddenly realising something. "That's where you went!"

"Great!" Miara said. "So they're dead now?"

"Oh, no." Repora said nicely. "I only put down enough C12 for one hole in it."

"Soâ€| how is that a victory?" Tracer asked.

"Well, they no longer have a vehicle." Repora pointed out. "I mean, they wouldn't want to waste time repairing it. And even if they did, where would they find the material?"

"And what if they do have the material?" Zen asked.

"Eh. It'd still take them about two hours."

"Excellent!" Atar exclaimed enthusiastically. "In that time, we can cut ahead of them!"

"In our piece of crap Phantom?" Miara questioned. "We'd get to their position just in time for them to repair their ship and take off."

"Hmâ€| good point." Atar agreed. "Then we'll just have to proceed on foot!"

"On foot?!" Utarz exclaimed.

"Are you seriously complaining about a walk?" Miara demanded.

"Well, the escape pod is a long way awayâ€|"

"And we can cover more distance in three minutes on foot than we can cover in one hour with the Phantom." Tracer pointed out. "Walking there will be much quicker."

"Not to mention that we'll be on even speeds with the Heretics." Zen added.

"Exactly!" Atar said. "We'll be there before we know it! Move out!"

"Uh, sir?" Tracer said.

"What now?"

"Don't you think we should get the supplies from our Phantom?" Tracer asked.

"I supposeâ€¦" Atar admitted, although he wanted to leave as soon as possible. "But take only what's necessary. Like the ammunition and medkit."

"Yes sir." Tracer agreed. "Should we take the Wraith as well?"

"I don't see why not. It'd be good to have a vehicle with weaponry."

"About that, actually." Utarz said. "Tracer, do you think that you could fix the guns on my Ghost?"

"They were sheared clean off." Tracer pointed out as he turned around to where their Phantom was. "I can't fix that. We'd have to completely replace the guns and we don't have the resources or time for that."

"Hold up, Tracer. I'll come with you." Miara piped up.

"**No, **you won't!" Utarz said heatedly.

Completely ignoring him, Miara walked up to Tracer. Tracer shrugged and said, "If you insist."

Then they walked off.

"Why is it that everyone just ignores me?" Utarz grumbled.

"Well, it'd probably have something to do with your attitude." Zen pointed out.

"What attitude?"

"Dishonourable behaviour, disrespect to superior officers," Atar listed. "Half-arsed way of doing jobs, drunken behaviourâ€¦ That sort of stuff."

"So? People should just learn to deal with who I am." Utarz stated.

"Or, you could engage in more honourable behaviour." Zen said angrily. Whenever Utarz started to talk, Zen felt himself get

aggravated.

"Yeah, uh, no thanks." Utarz snapped. "I don't do that sort of stuff."

"Why not?" Zen demanded.

Utarz didn't say anything. He didn't need to, however, because Repora suddenly spoke up for him.

"Because he's the kind of guy that likes to hold a grudge." Repora said pleasantly.

Atar and Zen looked at him.

"Right." Atar said. "So what does that mean?"

In a happy, optimistic tone, Repora replied, "None of your business."

* * *

><p>After their ship crashed last night, Iro had decided that they would sleep for the night at the crash site.<p>

As usual, Buzzsaw woke up early.

He grumbled a bit before fully waking up. Once he did, he got up and looked around.

No-one had bothered to take off their armour, as it was probably the only thing protecting them from the elements. However, this had the side effect of them being in freezing cold metal armour in the morning, which didn't really go well with Buzzsaw.

Tank had adopted a sleeping position where he was standing up, so you couldn't really tell whether he was sleeping or not. Iro had just slept on the ground.

Buzzsaw decided to wake up Iro first. After all, he had no intention of waking up Tank on his own. Tank had a habit of striking out if roused too quickly from his sleep.

Buzzsaw went over to Iro and began poking him repeatedly, saying over and over, "Wake up. Wake up. Wake up."

Iro groaned. "Whuâ€| what now?"

"Wake up."

"Is it that time already?" Iro stood up, rubbing the sleep out of his eyes.

"It was that time about two hours ago." Buzzsaw replied. "You know when I wake up."

Iro sighed. "Damn. I'll wake up Tank. You see if anything can be salvaged from the wreckage."

"Yeah, yeah." Buzzsaw walked over to the Phantom.

It wasn't in too bad of a shape when you looked at the back of it. However, the front had a massive hole in it that took part of the engine with it. They had all agreed that it was some sort of engine malfunction.

Buzzsaw hopped into the Phantom and looked around for anything of use. The crash hadn't been too bad, but there was still significant damage to everything inside. Eventually, Buzzsaw managed to find a plasma pistol, a human pistol, a repair kit, a medkit and a radio set.

As Buzzsaw was gathering his stuff, he heard a sudden rush of wind, an impact sound, something fly through the air and then another impact sound.

"IRO!" Tank yelled.

"I'm fine." Iro said weakly. "My energy shield protected me."

Buzzsaw climbed out, all the things he found in his arms. "So what were you dreaming about this time, big guy? Your bro again?"

Tank growled threateningly.

Iro stood up. "So Buzzsaw, what did you find?"

Buzzsaw dumped his findings on the ground. "Just these."

Iro picked up the UNSC pistol and put it on his weapon holster on his leg. "It'll do."

Buzzsaw picked up the plasma pistol. "I don't understand why you like that thing. Why would you want to hold something made for five fingers?"

"It reminds me what I'm fighting for." Iro said simply.

Tank looked at the Phantom. "Do we tell Gears about crash landing?"

"Of course not." Iro replied. "He'd have a fit. You know what he's like with this stuff."

"Yeah." Buzzsaw agreed. "I don't wanna hear any lectures from Gears."

Tank grunted.

"Right." Iro went inside the Phantom. "Are the navigation systems still online?"

"I think so." Buzzsaw said.

A moment of silence while Iro investigated the wreckage.

"Here we go!" He came out, satisfied. "The artefact is due north. If we just head that way, then we'll eventually get to the artefact."

"Wait." Buzzsaw held up a hand. "Are saying that we just walk to the artefact?"

"Well, we can't fix the Phantom." Iro replied. "The damage is too great."

"Iro is right." Tank agreed. "Only way to get to artefact is to walk."

"But it's so far away!" Buzzsaw whined.

Iro sighed in annoyance. "Really? Look, we need to get to the artefact before the 800 Squad does, alright? The Phantom is down, so we have to walk. It's as simple as that."

"But!"

"We have to leave as soon as possible." Iro said coldly. "***Start walking.***"

Buzzsaw looked up at Tank for support. He got none.

"Fine." Buzzsaw grumbled. "Let's just go."

* * *

><p>Miara and Tracer reached the Phantom.<p>

"I wonder if the Heretic's Phantom looks anything like ours now." Miara commented.

"Doubt it." Tracer replied.

"Okay, so I'll take the ammo and you'll take the medkit, how's that?" Miara asked.

"Sure."

As Miara climbed into the Phantom, she looked around the ship for the ammo. It was a collection of plasma batteries and needle clips really, plus some fuel rod gun and concussion rifle ammo.

Tracer, meanwhile, picked up the white packages with the red crosses on them. Tracer was really convinced that the same symbol was used for medkits universally.

"So!" Miara attempted as conversation. "How did your fight go?"

"I fired one shot at Iro, missed, then got knocked out in one punch." Tracer said bluntly.

"Ah!" Miara and Tracer stepped out of the Phantom. "Well, you still went better than I did."

"How so?" Tracer asked as he climbed into the Wraith.

"You fired a shot." Miara replied. "My flamethrower couldn't muster an ember."

Tracer sighed. "So you stuck with that thing, even though you knew it wouldn't work."

"Well, what else was I supposed to use?" Miara asked, annoyed.

"A plasma grenade, maybe." Tracer said, powering up the Wraith.

Miara blinked, then facepalmed. "_Dammit. _Can't believe I forgot about those things."

Unbeknownst to Miara, everyone had forgotten about the silver orbs that were connected to their legs.

"Me too." Tracer said. "Coming up?"

"Is there room for two?" Miara joked as she climbed onto the purple tank.

Tracer looked around the small confines of the driver's seat. "Uhâ€| noâ€| but the gun turret's available."

"Right." Miara climbed into it. "If only we had this thing when we attacked. Would've been a whole different story."

"Not really." Tracer countered. "It can't really shoot. I don't have enough electronite to power the main cannon and the gun turret needs a separate power core."

The Wraith started moving forward, ploughing through the trees.

"Do we have any spare cores?" Miara asked, dodging falling branches.

"Nope." Tracer replied. "Everything we have is powering the base."

"Greatâ€|" Miara ducked down to avoid another bunch of branches. "We really are lucky that the trees are so thin."

"Yeah."

They were silent for the rest of the trip, although they were both thinking about each other.

Miara really wanted to tell Tracer how she felt about him, but whenever she tried, she either lost her nerve or got interrupted by someone. On top of that, she didn't know whether Tracer felt the same way about her or whether he would return her feelings. She also didn't know much about Tracer's past aside from growing up, so she didn't know if he was an honourable choice.

Tracer had a similar problem. He knew how Miara felt about him and would have no problem telling her that he felt the same, but he didn't know if he did feel the same. And even if he did feel the same, he wasn't really sure how his family would react. They had reacted okay for when he said he was sent to the 800 Squad due to a minor technicality, but if he told him that he had found his love thereâ€| well, he just didn't know. On top of that, one of his siblings could do some research and figure out that Miara was related

to Utarz.

Neither of them really knew what to do about it.

Eventually, they started hearing loud arguing, which signalled that they were nearing the others.

"â€|It's a human creation!" Zen's voice shouted. "You shouldn't even be thinking about it! The very fact that you drink the stuff-!"

"Well, who cares?!" Utarz argued back. "It's beer, alright?! I don't care what the label is, beer is beer!"

They entered the clearing by ploughing through a few more trees. Zen and Utarz were currently yelling at each other, Repora was sitting the ground humming to himself and Atar was clearly nearing the last of his patience.

"Where did you even get that stuff?!" Zen pointed to a discarded bottle on the ground that looked suspiciously human.

"From Repora, alright?!" Utarz shouted.

"Alright," Zen turned to Repora. "Where did you get it from?!"

"You know what?" Repora said pleasantly. "I really don't know."

"If you lot don't stop saying things," Atar muttered. "I will personally beat your skulls into dust."

Zen and Utarz stopped arguing, although they kept glaring at each other. The silence, however, allowed them to hear the Wraith's distinctive whirr. They turned and saw the giant clearing of trees that they had left in their wake.

"We're back, sir." Tracer called.

"Good!" Atar jumped up. "Men, let's move out!"

"You think you could've destroyed any more of those trees?" Zen asked drily.

"We'll be ploughing through a lot more on the way to the pod, don't you worry." Tracer replied.

Utarz walked up to the thing. "Hey, Miara! Get down here!"

Miara swivelled the gun to point at Utarz.

"Never mind." Utarz turned and walked off.

"Uh, Miara?" Tracer said once Utarz was out of earshot. "You know that thing can't shoot."

"Yeah," Miara said. "But he doesn't need to know that."

* * *

><p>The Heretics walked on their way to the pod. They didn't know it,

but they were quite ahead of the 800 Squad at this point.<p>

"Soâ€|" Buzzsaw decided to address a major issue. "Once we get to the artefact, how are we going to get it out of here?"

"â€|I don't know." Iro admitted. "I'll have to think of something."

"Like what? We just drive the _Truth _down here?" The Phantom crash had really ticked Buzzsaw off. "I mean, what's gonna stop the 800 Squad from blowing it up when we're not looking?"

"Iro said he will think of something." Tank said angrily. "So he will think of something."

"And if he doesn't?"

"Are you saying you have no faith in Iro?" Tank demanded.

"I'm not saying that." Buzzsaw said quickly. "I'm just saying that it might just slip his mind, you know?"

"It won't." Iro said. "I've already begun thinking of something."

Buzzsaw blinked. "You have?"

"Yesâ€|" Iro was indeed thinking of a way to succeed. "First, we need to figure out how to slow the 800 Squad down. Stop them from getting to the artefact."

"And how do we do that?" Buzzsaw asked.

"I haven't thought of that part yet." Iro admitted.

"Great plan. Really solid."

"Let's think." Iro said, ignoring Buzzsaw. "What could possibly make the 800 Squad pause on their journey?"

Buzzsaw thought about this. "Uhâ€| loss of Phantom?"

Iro snorted. "I highly doubt that even they're stupid enough to keep using that broken-down piece of crap."

Buzzsaw thought a bit more. He knew that if he lost something dear to him, or important to him, then he would slow down. Maybe if he lost something he would try to find itâ€| but the 800 Squad wouldn't have anything that they would be able to take from themâ€| maybe their weaponryâ€| but they kept that with them all the timeâ€|

Then the answer came to him.

"How about loss of teammate?"

Iro and Tank looked at him.

"What?" Buzzsaw asked, annoyed.

"I thought we agreed that we wouldn't kill any of them." Iro

growled.

"That's not what I meant." Buzzsaw said. "I say that we kidnap one of them."

"Kidnapping?" Tank grunted.

Intrigued, Iro asked, "How will that slow them down?"

"Duh!" Buzzsaw exclaimed. "They'll try to find their teammate, right? They'll waste time trying to rescue him, which will give us more time to get to the artefact!"

"Trueâ€|" Iro had to admit that Buzzsaw had a pretty solid plan. "But where will we hold him?"

"â€|Oh." Buzzsaw quickly started thinking. "Maybe we could find a Forerunner installationâ€| and, umâ€|"

"There are no Forerunner installations on this planet." Iro pointed out. "The Covenant doesn't want the 800 Squad to damage anything valuable, remember?"

"Uhâ€|" Buzzsaw quickly thought up something else. "How about something like a canyon? Or a ravine? We could just shove him in there!"

"Is there a ravine nearby?" Iro asked.

Buzzsaw shrugged. "Dunno. I could go see."

Iro thought of Buzzsaw's plan. It made sense. The 800 Squad wouldn't leave one of their own people in a prison cell. It sounded like something that could work if they found a place to put the prisoner.

"Yes. Go see." Iro ordered. "Make sure that it's relatively nearby to our current location."

"Got it." Buzzsaw then pressed a button on his chest and disappeared.

Iro turned to Tank. "In the meantime, we should decide on a prisoner. That's to say, if Buzzsaw succeeds in his mission and finds a place for us to put him."

"Not him." Tank corrected. "Her."

Iro blinked. "The female? You're saying we should kidnap the female?"

Tank nodded.

"Have you got no sense of honour?" Iro snapped. "We can't kidnap a female!"

"She is only one with no working weapon." Tank said. "Wouldn't be as dangerous."

"It wouldn't be as dangerous to take the blue one." Iro argued. "He

doesn't sound that competent."

"No-one like Utarz." Tank replied. "They would leave him to rot."

"â€|Seriously?"

Tank nodded.

"What about the purple one?"

"Is a doctor. You don't like doctors."

"â€|Ermâ€| the white one?"

"Is insane. Too unpredictable."

"Zen?"

"Still hope for him. Kidnapping will remove hope."

"The red one?"

Tank growled. "No. Tank will not harm Atar."

"What is it with you and Atar?" Iro complained.

Tank said nothing.

Iro sighed. "Fine. We'll take the female."

Tank nodded. "Who will take her?"

"I will." Iro said. "But I will wait until the perfect opportunity before I do."

* * *

><p>Author's Notes

I've got nothing to say here. :

Thanks for watching.

Potato.

11. Mostly Character Development

The Halo Universe belongs to Microsoft Studios and 343 Industries. But these characters are my own creation and cannot be used without my permission. If you do use them without my permission, then Tank will demolish your house personally before ripping you apart piece by piece. Enjoy the show.

* * *

><p>The Sangheili 800 Squad

Chapter 10: Mostly Character Development

* * *

><p>February, 2552 (Human Calendar)

1034 Hours

Frozen Forest

* * *

><p>The sun had long ago set before Utarz decided to start complaining.<p>

Unfortunately, Zen was right behind him, so he had to listen to every single word that came out of Utarz's mandibles.

He found himself on the verge of growling whenever Utarz said something like, "Are we there yet?" or, "How long is this going to take?" or his personal favourite, "Is anyone even paying attention to me?"

Deciding to back off to avoid losing it, Zen walked up to the Wraith, pushing past Utarz in the process.

"Hey!" Utarz complained. "Watch it!"

Ignoring him, Zen continued up to the Wraith and looked up at it. "Hey Tracer, you got a sec?"

"I've got a few hundred, yeah." Tracer confirmed. "Why?"

"I need to make some conversation so I can't hear Utarz." Zen replied.

"Perfectly understandable." Miara said from the gun turret.

"Alright." Tracer poked his head up from the Wraith. "Hey Miara, would you mind driving the Wraith for a while?"

"I don't know how to drive a Wraith." Miara replied.

"You'll be fine." Tracer said, climbing out. "Just push the forward pedal down and make sure that you don't turn to the side. Look at the compass every now and then to make sure that we're heading north."

"â€|Okayâ€|" Miara said uncertainly, climbing into the driver's pit.

The Wraith was immobile for a moment before moving forward again.

"There we go." Tracer said satisfactorily. He looked at Zen. "Right. So what do you want to talk about?"

Zen shrugged. "Anything would be better than Utarz's infernal complaining."

"How about families?" Tracer suggested.

Zen refrained himself from wincing. He had been trying not to think about his family since he arrived in the 800 Squad. But it was either that, or listening to Utarz. "I suppose."

"Okay. So, do you have any siblings?"

"Two." Zen sighed. "Both of them are younger than me. When I was a child, I would refer to them as the spawn of the devil."

"That bad?"

"Yeah."

"Male or female?"

"I've got a sister and a brother." Zen replied. "My brother's currently waiting for approval to join the army."

"And your parents?"

_Oh, joy. _"They're both pretty militaristic. My father was in the military for fifty years before he retired."

Tracer chuckled. "Atar's almost reached that point."

"Yeahâ€¦| What about your parents?"

"Ehâ€¦| they're not really militaristicâ€¦| that said, they're not pacifists either."

"Ever in the army?"

"My father was for about thirty-five yearsâ€¦| certainly wasn't by choice, though."

"Any siblings?"

"No."

A thought struck Zen. "Sayâ€¦| how did your parents react to your placement in the 800 Squad?"

"Wellâ€¦| my mother start lying about my placement and my father tried to see if there had been some mistakeâ€¦| but in the end, they were accepting of my decision."

Tracer regretted the words he said almost immediately.

Zen nodded, not really accepting what he said. Once it sunk in though, he spun around to look at him. "Your _decision?!_"

Tracer looked around to see if anyone had heard him. Once he saw that no-one had, he turned to Zen and hissed, "Never tell ****anyone**** that I said that."

"Hold on, hold on," Zen whispered. "What do you mean, 'your decision'?"

Tracer refused to answer.

Before Zen could press on, Atar called, "Company, HALT!"

"What?" Utarz asked blankly.

"Stop moving."

"Oh."

Miara stopped the Wraith and poked her head out. "Something up?"

"Negatory!" Atar replied. "As you all have noticed, it has grown to be night. We will set up camp here and wait for tomorrow night."

"That'd work for me." Repora said happily. "I've been getting tired with all this walking."

"Wait, so we're sleeping out in the open?" Utarz complained. "It's freezing!"

"Do you have a warm place in mind?" Atar growled. "If not, then you sleep out here."

Utarz climbed off of his Ghost, grumbling in annoyance.

Miara climbed out of the Wraith and turned to Tracer. "Hey, Tracer? Why does this thing have eight pedals if it can only go in four directions?"

Tracer sighed. "Power, forwards, left, right, brake, backwards, boost and emergency eject."

"â€|Ah."

* * *

><p>Buzzsaw had decided to turn the cloaking off until he ran into trouble.<p>

However, he was having difficulty running into trouble.

In fact, there seemed to be no-one around at this time of night.

"Well, this is just great." Buzzsaw muttered. "How am I supposed to find a ravine in this darkness?"

This wasn't the first time Buzzsaw had been given a task that had eventually become near impossible to do. He had been given a few and he had since become sick of them.

This was part of the reason why he and Iro didn't get along well. He always wanted him to do tasks that he just assumed would get completed on time. And when they didn't get completed on time, then Iro would get cranky.

What infuriated Buzzsaw, really, was how this was how Grunts were

treated universally. They were seen as slave labour, not as actual living, breathing creatures! Why should the Grunts do all the work around here?

The more he thought about this, the angrier he got. It's time that his race should really shine! Time that the Sangheili stop abusing them! Time that-

Buzzsaw's foot fell through empty air.

With a yell, Buzzsaw toppled off what seemed to be a cliff that had appeared out of nowhere. He found himself falling over and over, with the ground coming up fast.

In a desperate attempt to save himself, he activated his saw and shoved it into the side of the cliff. He knew this would blunt the blade, but he really didn't care at this point.

Eventually, his fall slowed down with him safely touching the ground. He breathed a sigh of relief and looked around.

About twenty metres in front of him was another cliff face.

Buzzsaw looked around. He had fallen into a ravine.

_Convenient. _Buzzsaw thought. _I wonder if there's an easy way downâ€¦|_

Completely forgetting about the injustices he was fuming about a minute ago, Buzzsaw walked along the edge of the ravine. He found a bunch of caves, shallow and perfect for putting prisoners in. He also noticed that the ground rose steadily upwards.

In fact, it rose upwards until he was back on ground level.

Buzzsaw chuckled. _And here I was thinking that this was getting impossible._

* * *

><p>"Shouldn't Buzzsaw be back by now?" Iro asked Tank, impatience seeping into his mind.<p>

"Is dark." Tank said, looking up at the sky. "Buzzsaw might be lost."

"I wouldn't doubt it." Iro muttered. "It's either that or he's run away."

Tank looked at Iro. "Buzzsaw wouldn't run."

"Oh, yes he would." Iro replied. "Trust me, I understand Grunts. Back when I worked for the Covenant, my entire platoon of Grunts deserted my out of fear. They're a cowardly race."

Tank would've sighed, or rolled his eyes if he could. He had heard this story from Iro dozens of times. So had Buzzsaw and Gears, but no-one really complained about it. They couldn't change his mind, so they didn't bother arguing with him.

This was one of the few things that Tank didn't like about Iro. He didn't know how to let go of grudges. He remembered ever wrong that was done against him without apology. He couldn't let go of the past.

That said, Tank couldn't really speak. After all, his bond brotherâ€¦

Tank shook his head. Best not to dwell on the past.

"So have you thought of plan to get artefact off planet?" Tank asked.

"No." Iro admitted. "We can't get the ship down here, so that means that we have to rely on Gears."

"What can Gears do?" Tank asked.

"I don't know. We'll let him figure that out."

"Great plan." A sarcastic voice snarked from nowhere.

Iro sighed. "Buzzsaw, reveal yourself."

Buzzsaw materialised out of thin air. "Why? I thought you didn't like looking at me."

"Did you find a place or not?" Iro demanded.

"Yup." Buzzsaw said.

"How typi- wait, you did?"

"Yeah. Follow me." Buzzsaw said.

And they did follow him. Buzzsaw seemed to know which way to go, so they followed him until they reached the gigantic crack in the planet.

"Excellent." Iro said satisfactorily.

"So where will we put prisoner?" Tank asked.

"We'll have to get down there to find out. Buzzsaw, is there a safe way down?"

"Over there." Buzzsaw pointed to an incline that lead down to the bottom.

Iro slid down the incline, with Buzzsaw and Tank following him. Iro looked at the many caves and said, "We could hold a whole platoon down here."

"So, when we've put the prisoner down here, how do we stop him from getting out?" Buzzsaw asked.

Iro looked around. He then pointed to a wall. "Tank, do you think you can make a slab from that wall?"

Tank nodded and walked towards it.

"So, we seal him in with a rock, huh?" Buzzsaw said.

"Yes. Of course, we'll need to make it so that she can breathe, but also so that she can't get out."

"Uhâ€| huhâ€|" Buzzsaw took note of a certain word in Iro's sentence. "So we're taking the female?"

"Yes."

"Alright, who's gonna take her?"

"I will."

Buzzsaw raised what could be an eyebrow. "You? Kidnapping? Doesn't that require stealth?"

"Yes, so what?"

A loud smash sounded a bit behind Iro. "Well, it's just that I have a cloaking device. Not some active camo unit, a properly working invisibility machine. I would be a much better choice to kidnap her."

"Really. And why do you think that?"

"What do you mean? I just saidâ€|"

Iro sighed. "Buzzsaw, you are much smaller than a Sangheili. She would easily overpower you."

"Hey, I overpowered that blue guy, thank you very much!"

Tank walked up to them and said bluntly, "Utarz is idiot."

"Yeah, but according to you, the female is the blue guy's sister. And you know what they say, the fruit doesn't fall far from the tree."

"Only reason she didn't beat Tank was because her weapon didn't work." Tank replied.

"Okay, what's her weapon?"

"Flamethrower."

"â€|Okay, Iro?" Buzzsaw said weakly. "You can take her."

Iro rolled his eyes and looked at Tank. "I take it you've made a slab?"

Tank nodded and pointed to a large boulder to the side.

"Good. Buzzsaw, if you could shave a few parts offâ€|"

Buzzsaw extended his saw and showed the dented blade. "No-can-do. I need to sharpen this thing before I use it again."

"Fine. Tank, could you make the boulder a bit of an oval

shape?"

Tank nodded.

* * *

><p>Miara sat down and looked at her flamethrower.<p>

_Stupid piece of crap. _She thought bitterly. _If it had worked, we would've beaten Tank._

She looked into the nozzle. It looked okay. No blockages or anything. She flicked a switch. The pilot light was working fine. She aimed away from herself and pulled the trigger.

This seemed to be where she was having the problem. Instead of a red-orange stream of fire coming out, nothing was happening. Which meant something must be wrong with the trigger.

Miara reached to dismantle it, but stopped when she realised that she didn't have her tool kit with her.

"Great." Miara grumbled. _This is why I'm in the 800 Squad. Can't even fix a _human _weapon without my tool kit._

She looked up. Everyone was sleeping at the moment. Utarz had done so in his Ghost while Tracer had fallen asleep in his Wraith. Atar had gone to sleep on the ground (which no-one could really understand), Zen had found some leaves to sleep on and Repora wasâ€|

â€|sleeping on a mattress.

Where the hell did he get a mattress?!

Shaking that thought out of her head, Miara put away the flamethrower and climbed into a log. Deciding to sleep for the night, Miara closed her eyes and forced herself to slip into a sleep-induced coma.

* * *

><p>In what seemed like five seconds later, Atar was shouting at them. "GET UPS, TROOPS!"<p>

Miara groaned and opened her eyes. "Already?"

"It's 4 am Miara." Atar said, roughly shaking her. "I let you lot sleep in an hour."

Tracer sighed, getting out of the Wraith and walking over to Zen. He gently nudged him with his foot. "Come on. Up you get."

Zen forced himself up. "What time is it?"

"4 am."

"Atar let us sleep in?"

"Get up, numb-nuts!" Atar snapped, smashing Utarz's head against his Ghost.

"OW!" Utarz woke up immediately. "What the hell?!"

"I told you to wake up!" Atar snarled, walking over to Repora. "We're leaving."

Utarz rubbed his head. "I think I preferred it when you just yelled into the intercom every morning."

Before Atar could say or do anything, Repora sprang up and chirped, "Good morning everybody! Let's go find an artefact and save the world!"

And then he ran off into the woods.

Ten seconds later, he came back and asked, "Uhâ€¦ where's the artefact again?"

Within a few minutes, they had gone back to the positions they were in yesterday, with Tracer ploughing through the trees in his Wraith and everyone else tailing behind.

Utarz hovered up to Miara. "Oi, sis."

"Don't call me that." Miara said coldly.

"Fine. Miara. Can we talk?"

"I've told you time and time again-!"

"Not about Tracer! About your flamethrower."

Miara glared at him suspiciously. "Why do you care about my flamethrower?"

"Well, it didn't work, right?"

"Right."

"And it caused you to get knocked out, right?"

"Uh, huh."

"Which means that you could've gotten killed."

"And you care because...?"

"Becauseâ€¦ I just do, alright? You're my sister."

"In blood only." Miara said angrily. "My brother in both blood and soul would treat honour and battle seriously and not perform dishonourable acts like drinking all day long and fucking whores!"

"Hey! I resent that!" Utarz snapped. "I only drink for half the day."

"Even so! I refuse to be the sister of someone so dishonourable and disrespectful!"

"Oh, come on!" Utarz said angrily. "You make it sound so bad when

it's really not!"

"It is! Your actions have brought shame upon our keep! You don't even deserve your name!"

By now, everyone else could hear their argument and were doing their best to act as if it wasn't happening. Atar, however, had heard enough.

He backed up to Miara and Utarz and growled, "Both of you shut up. If you want to have a family discussion, then take it somewhere private."

"Hey, how about-!" Utarz started angrily.

"Miara, I would like to have a discussion with you."

"Sure."

Atar turned to Utarz. "Buzz off."

Utarz grumbled, but boosted forward to annoy Tracer.

"Right." Atar said quietly. "As much as I hate it, I have to agree with Utarz with the first point."

Miara spluttered indignantly. Atar quickly continued. "If I had known that your primary weapon wasn't working, then I wouldn't have sent you out to fight Tank. You need to tell people these things, otherwise they can't help you."

"This is something that I want to fix myself." Miara mumbled.

"Regardless. You still need to tell someone when you're at a disadvantage so that they can help you."

Miara sighed. "I justâ€¦ didn't want to be treated as someone who needed to be protected."

"Hm?"

Miara looked at Atar. "I was sent to this squad for my own protection. Just because I'm female. People see me as unfit for the military just because I'm a **female.**"

Atar fidgeted uncomfortably. "Wellâ€¦ to be fair, you are the only female to join the military for about fourteen millennia."

"Still, I want to be treated as a soldier, not as some damsel in distress."

"That would be difficult."

"What do you mean?"

Atar sighed. "As you know, the Covenant's military force is mostly composed of the stronger sex. Most of these soldiers haven't seen a female inâ€¦ well, years."

Miara decided that she didn't want to hear what Atar had to say.

"You're placed in this squad to make sure that no-one takes advantage of you. I'm not saying that other Sangheili would do such a thing, butâ€¦"

"Right." Miara said. "Not sure I wanted to know that."

"Well, it's the truth."

Miara looked at her teammates, feeling paranoid all of a sudden. "Would any of them do that?"

"Not reallyâ€¦ Utarz probably would if you weren't his sibling."

_Or if he was really desperate. _Miara thought to herself.

"So you don't have to worry about anyone here stooping that low." Atar said.

"Good." A thought suddenly struck Miara. "Uh, on that note, uhâ€¦ would having sex with a fellow soldier be illegal?"

Atar stared at her.

"Just a hypothetical question." Miara said quickly.

"â€¦Right." Atar said, unconvinced. "Wellâ€¦ there's not really any law against male and female soldiers mating when on military premisesâ€¦ generally because it's never happened before. I'd expect that it'd be frowned upon, but it's not technically illegal."

"Alright." Miara said.

"So who is it?" Atar asked bluntly.

"I'm not sure what you're talking about sir."

"Bull."

"I'dâ€¦ rather not say sir. Personal information."

"Wellâ€¦ I won't force you to disclose that information, but I will encourage you not to be secretive with that information."

"I don't follow you, sir."

"Basically, I don't want any secret relationships in my squad. A loving relationship in the squad is bad enough. But withholding it from everyone else just because you don't want them to judge you? That is just cowardice."

Atar turned and looked at Miara. "Don't forget that cowardice is unacceptable in this squad. If you're going to have a relationship with a fellow soldier, then don't make it a secret."

Atar then marched upwards to stop Tracer from jumping out of the Wraith and strangling Utarz.

Miara scratched the back of her head, uncomfortable. She wasn't sure why she started with that conversation with her general in the first place. But she did have to admit that he had a point.

She couldn't be a coward about this.

* * *

<p>Author's notes

****So, this is going rather well!****

â€|****In comparison to Marines and Elites.****

****Thanks for watching.****

****Potato.****

12. Taken

****The Halo Universe belongs to Microsoft Studios and 343 Industries. But these characters are my own creation and cannot be used without my permission. If you do use them without my permission, then Atar will blow up your head with a shotgun after disabling you by the knees and arms. Enjoy the show.****

* * *

<p>The Sangheili 800 Squad

****Chapter 11: Taken****

* * *

<p>February, 2550 (Human Calender)

****2441 Hours****

****Heretic Chasm****

* * *

<p>"Soâ€|" Buzzsaw sighed. "Got any aces?"<p>

"No." Tank rumbled.

Buzzsaw picked up a card. "By the Gods, I'm bored. When is Iro gonna kidnap the Sangheili girl already?"

"Iro is waiting for perfect opportunity." Tank replied. "May take while. Do you have a six?"

Buzzsaw handed him a card with six squares on it. "Well, I realised that it would take him a while, but still, it's almost midnight. How long is it going to take him?"

Tank shrugged. "All we can do is wait."

"I've been doing that for the past few hours." Buzzsaw replied. "Do you have any threes?"

Tank handed him a card with three circles on it.

"I dunno, I just wonder sometimesâ€|" Buzzsaw said, placing the card on a pile. "Do you think Iro just takes us for granted?"

"No." Tank said bluntly.

"You sure? 'Cause I don't remember the last time he thanked me for doing something. Oh, that's right, he never has."

"Iro respects me and Gears. Not you."

That just pissed Buzzsaw off. "Why? Because I'm a Grunt?"

"Yes. Do you have a knight?"

Buzzsaw handed him a card. "So what does he have against Grunts that makes my species inferior?"

"Grunts are cowards." Tank replied.

"Oh, come on!" Buzzsaw said angrily, throwing his arms into the air. "That's just a stereotype! If Grunts were just cowards and nothing else, then what was the Grunt Rebellion, huh?! We're brave! We're just not motivated!"

"You are motivated with being able to live."

"No, that's a threat! My species doesn't deserve threats! The Uggnoy are an ancient race of beings that are being denied the respect that we deserve! We should be the ones ruling the Covenant! Well, maybe not the Covenant, but we shouldn't be being pushed around!"

Tank loathed listening to Buzzsaw's rants. They were completely one-sided and repetitive. The words varied, but the general message never changed: the Grunts were victims that needed to be saved, the Sangheili and the Prophets were the bad guys who needed to be punished and everyone who didn't think like this was a monster.

It was almost as exhausting as intense physical exercise.

Getting his mind back to the card game, Tank asked, "Do you have an eight?"

"Now isn't the time for cards, now is the time for action!" Buzzsaw snapped. "No more shall my speciesâ€|"

"Do you have an eight?" Tank snarled.

Buzzsaw quickly handed him a card.

* * *

><p>Tracer was fiddling with the Wraith.<p>

He knew that the journey ahead would take a while, so he was trying to figure out a way to conserve energy so that they could actually

get to the artefact in time.

Unfortunately, he couldn't find a way to do so without lowering the speed of the Wraith. The only real option would be to put more power into the Wraith, but he didn't have any more electronite.

Which was really inconvenient. While electronite was much more reliable than plasma, plasma was still much more widely used. There was not a single race in the Covenant that used electronite. Tracer was literally the only one.

As if being a medic wasn't alienating enough. No matter how many times he told people, they always called him a doctor, not a medic. He had even explicitly explained that a medic and a doctor were different.

Added to that was the fact that he chose to be in the 800 Squad. Others wouldn't be able to understand why Tracer would want to be in the reject pile.

And Tracer couldn't explain his reason to them without offending them.

He heard something move to his right. He turned to see Miara walking up to him.

"Aren't you supposed to be asleep?" Tracer asked.

"I could say the same to you." Miara replied. "Anyway, I'm finding it way too cold to go to sleep."

"Have you tried adjusting your armour's temperature?"

"Doesn't work."

"You're kidding me." Tracer groaned. "First the zoom and now the temperature?"

"Well, we don't really maintain our armour." Miara pointed out.

"Stillâ€¦ how many things must I repair in my career?"

"Quite a few, probably."

Tracer sighed, turning his attention back to the Wraith. "You should go to sleep. You'll need your energy for tomorrow."

Miara fiddled with her fingers, suddenly nervous. "Actually Tracer, umâ€¦ I came out here to tell you something."

"What is it? Everything okay?"

"Wellâ€¦ it's about you, actually."

"Uh, huh."

"Umâ€¦" Miara felt really nervous. "Well, we've known each other for a long time, you know?"

"This sounds familiar."

"Yeah, wellâ€ during a long time like that, the feelings one has for another can change, gradually, over time andâ€ wellâ€"

_Hoo boy. _Tracer thought. _I think she's finally going to say it._

"Wellâ€" Miara continued, telling herself to just calm down. "My feelings for you haveâ€ changedâ€ over time. When I first met youâ€ I thought of you as a doctorâ€"

"And then you tried to hit me." Tracer said with amusement.

Miara chuckled. "Yeahâ€ butâ€ now, I think of you as a friendâ€ no, more than a friend, actuallyâ€"

"Uh, huh."

"Tracerâ€" Miara inhaled deeply. "Iâ€ think I've fallen in love with you."

Miara immediately felt a weight disappear from her chest.

Tracer put down his tools and sighed. "Yeahâ€ I knowâ€"

"I know this is bit of a- wait, you know?!" Miara suddenly realised what he said. "How could you know?!"

Tracer gave her an amused look. "You're nicer to me than anyone else, you go out of your way to be in my presence and you've given me this talk about five dozen times. With all due respect, it's not exactly rocket science."

Miara scratched her head. "Ohâ€ I guess it is a bit obvious, isn't it?"

"Only a bit."

"Rightâ€ soâ€" Miara came to the second part of the conversation. "Do you love me?"

Tracer was silent for a few seconds. Then he said heavily, "Iâ€ don't know."

Miara would've frowned. "What do you mean?"

"Miaraâ€ if I had been sure about my feelings about you, I would've just told you a long time ago. Butâ€" Tracer shook his head. "My mind is split into two about this matter. On one side, I view you as a friend and co-worker. On the other, not only are you the only female I've ever been this close to, but you'reâ€"

"I'mâ€?" Miara looked at him curiously.

Tracer was trying to find a way to call her beautiful without giving her false hope.

"Anywayâ€" Tracer continued. "I'm just really confused about my feelings for you at the moment. I'm not entirely sure which side of

my brain to listen to. Iâ€| just need more time to think about it."

"Okay."

"â€|That's it?"

"Yup." Miara nodded. "I'll give you some time to think about it and you can tell me when you're ready. And if it's not the answer I likeâ€| then I'll just deal with it."

"Alright then." Tracer picked up his tools. "Soâ€| you should probably go to bed."

"Sure." Miara said.

* * *

><p>Iro sighed. All he needed was for the female to be alone for just five minutes. Just five minutes.<p>

But it seemed that she was always surrounded. When she slept, the others were nearby. And she never spent any alone time.

What he needed was to draw her away from the rest of the squad.

Right now, she was walking back to her makeshift bed. Iro had climbed one of the many trees in order to get a better view of the place. While this gave him a better vantage point, it also made him slightly easier to spot.

He silently climbed down, watching as the female sat down on her bed and sighed.

I need an attention grabber. Iro thought. _I don't need much. A pebble will do._

He looked around and saw a medium-sized rock.

He shrugged. _It'll do._

He picked up the rock and threw it at the female.

* * *

><p>A medium-sized object hit Miara's arm.<p>

"OW!"

She froze, looking around to see if she woke up the others. They were still asleep. Tracer probably didn't hear her. He was known for getting wrapped up in his work.

Miara rubbed her arm and looked at the projectile that had hit her. It was a rock. About the size needed to cause some major damage if it hit her head.

She looked around, suddenly paranoid. A rock like that didn't just fly out of nowhere. Someone would have to throw it.

She looked from where the rock had come from. The forest was particularly dark at this time of night. She needed some light and a working weapon, just in case this was a trap.

She looked at her flamethrower. No point in taking that thing. If she got into trouble, then she wouldn't be able to defend herself.

So she went over to Utarz and stole his plasma rifle.

She followed the trajectory of the rock, looking around for any sign of an ambush. The shadows seemed to dance and show things that weren't there. It was creeping her out.

Deciding it wasn't worth it, she started to back up and go back to the camp.

Another rock hit her in the stomach.

Miara gasped in pain, dropping the plasma rifle. She looked around for her attacker, but all she could see were trees and darkness.

Picking up Utarz's gun again, she proceeded forward, deciding that she would find this guy no matter what.

"Who's there?" She said angrily. "Show yourself!"

She cursed herself once she realised how cliché that was.

She walked forward cautiously, looking everywhere. She kept hearing noises but refrained herself from spinning around.

After about three minutes, Miara started to realise how stupid this really was. She had gone too far from the others and she still hadn't found her attacker. If she went any further, then the others wouldn't be able to find her if she got injured.

She turned around to go back.

A scarlet-clad figure blocked her.

"I apologize in advance for my actions." Iro said. "But you are really the only candidate for this."

Miara stared at him for a moment.

Then she shot at him.

Ignoring the plasma shots that got absorbed by his energy shield, Iro grabbed the plasma rifle and forced it upwards. Then, he punched her in the stomach, winding her. Finally, he swept out her legs from underneath, causing her to fall.

When she hit the ground, Iro pinned her down, stopping her from getting back up.

"You know," Iro said conversationally. "You are the only female warrior I've ever seen in my life. This truly is a milestone for me."

"Let me go, you dishonourable rat!" Miara snarled, struggling to get up.

"I am neither of those things." Iro said. "Although, I will not deny that I regret having to kidnap you."

With that, he pulled out his pistol and smashed the back of her head.

* * *

><p>Buzzsaw sat up against the wall of the ravine.<p>

Tank stood in the middle of it, like a silent guardian.

Neither of them had anything to do at the moment.

"You ever hit rock bottom boredom, Tank?" Buzzsaw asked. "Because this is it. This is rock bottom boredom. This is boredom's lowest depth."

Tank said nothing.

"No, in fact, it's worse." Buzzsaw sighed. "This is boredom incarnate. This is the physical representation of boredom. The place where one can be the most bored he will ever be in his life."

Tank ignored him, searching for Iro's shape in the darkness.

"I mean, I've been bored before, but this?" Buzzsaw continued. "This has got to be the most bored I've ever been in my life. Like, the only thing I have to think about is being bored. There is nothing else to occupy my mind."

"Tank would like to play something." Tank said.

Buzzsaw snorted. "Tank, we've exhausted all the card games we have, what could we possibly play now?"

"The quiet game."

"â€|Screw you."

Tank ignored him.

"Seriously. We've been waiting all day for him to take her! He should be done by now!"

Tank grunted.

Buzzsaw suddenly sat up straight. "Waitâ€| what if he's been captured?"

"That is not likely." Tank pointed out.

"Yeah, I know, but stillâ€| what if?"

Tank looked at him. "Why do you care? You don't like Iro."

"Yeah, I know. I hate him. But he's the only guy capable of leading us." Buzzsaw explained. "I mean, think about it. Could you imagine what it'd be like if I was in charge?"

Tank thought about this. He could picture himself helping Buzzsaw lead a rebellion to free the Grunts.

"Yes." Tank said.

"Is it good?"

"No."

"Exactly!" Buzzsaw stood up. "Without Iro, there would be no 'us'. We should see if he's encountered any problems."

"That is not necessary." Tank said, pointing towards the top of the ravine.

Buzzsaw peered into the darkness. He couldn't see much, but he could make out a dark figure in the distance.

"About time." Buzzsaw grumbled.

When Iro had become more visible, Tank and Buzzsaw could see that Iro was holding something on his shoulder. When he reached them, the object was clearly the female Sangheili.

"Took you a while." Buzzsaw said drily.

"I was waiting for the perfect opportunity." Iro replied irritably, setting Miara down on the ground. "You're welcome, by the way."

"Whatever." Buzzsaw looked at the female. "So, what now?"

"What do you mean?"

"Well, how are we going to stop her from running off when she wakes up?" Buzzsaw asked.

"Simple." Iro replied. "Take off her armour."

Buzzsaw double blinked in alarm. "Wait, what?!"

"Her armour keeps her temperature regulated." Iro explained. "She may be slightly cold, but nothing fatal. However, if we take off her armour and hide it somewhere, she'd freeze to death if she tried to escape."

Tank nodded. "Good plan."

Still not convinced, Buzzsaw asked a different question. "And what's stopping her from taking our weapons and killing us?"

"We'll put our weapons under Tank." Iro said.

"This plan can work." Tank said. "Buzzsaw. Obey Iro."

"No way!" Buzzsaw stuttered, trying desperately to get out of this.

"Iro, why don't you do it?!"

Iro's tiredness and frustration started to merge with embarrassment at this proposition.

"Because I've already kidnapped her and given her a lump on the head." Iro growled. "So you do it."

"But I don't wanna see her naked!" Buzzsaw complained.

"Oh, grow up." Iro said irritably. "Sangheili don't have external sex organs, remember?"

"Yeah, butâ€¦" Buzzsaw felt the heat rise to his face. "Herâ€¦ you knowâ€¦ nipples."

Iro sighed in annoyance. "Sangheili don't have those, either."

This threw Buzzsaw completely off track. "Woah, wait. You don't?"

"No." Iro was starting to wish he had never embarked on any of this. "Sangheili can't suck or blow. It wouldn't make any sense for the females to excrete milk."

Buzzsaw considered this.

"That's weird." He said.

"It's the process of evolution." Iro replied.

"So, if you can't suck or blowâ€¦" Buzzsaw said, something occurring to him. "Then how do you sigh?"

Iro thought about this. "â€¦Uhâ€¦Iâ€¦ don't knowâ€¦?"

"We are off topic." Tank interrupted them.

"â€¦Right." Iro said quickly, not wanting to discuss this any further. "Buzzsaw, strip her. Tank, make sure he does so."

Tank looked at Buzzsaw threateningly.

Buzzsaw sighed and started to look for the points where Miara's armour came off.

"Oh, and Tank?" Iro added. "I would recommend sitting near the female during the night so that she doesn't freeze to death."

Tank froze.

* * *

><p>February, 2550 (Human Calender)

1034 Hours

800 Squad Camp

* * *

><p>Once everyone had realised that Miara had officially disappeared, they had spent around two hours searching for her in the surrounding forest.<p>

When they couldn't find her, Atar had tried contacting her via radio, but all that had been heard was static.

Finally, Repora had pointed out looking for her footprints in the snow, but the snowfall had covered any tracks she might have left.

Eventually, everyone gathered at the camp waiting for Atar to give a speech.

"Well, everyone." Atar said to the gathered group. "Miara has officially gone MIA."

"Wow!" Utarz said angrily. "Thanks for that breaking news, Captain State the Obvious!"

Atar shot at him.

Utarz yelled and dodged the round.

"As I was saying." Atar growled. "Miara has gone missing. This can lead us to three possible explanations."

"Three explanations?" Repora asked.

"One, she's been kidnapped by the Heretics in an attempt to slow us down." Atar explained. "Two, she's been killed by the Heretics in an attempt to disillusion us. And three, she's betrayed us and joined the Heretics."

"I don't think she's betrayed us, sir." Zen said.

"I agree." Atar nodded. "She left her flamethrower behind! She never goes anywhere without it, broken or not."

"So, she's either kidnapped, or dead." Repora said pleasantly. "Shame about the no betrayal thing, though. It would've made for an interesting plot twist. Think about it! Chasing down a rogue soldier, not knowing what twisted deal the enemy has made with her!"

"Shut up, Repora!" Tracer snapped.

Zen looked at Tracer. He seemed to be unusually agitated, distressed even. Zen owed it up to never losing a teammate before. That, or something else.

"Well, how do we figure out which one it is?" Utarz asked.

"Why do you want to know?" Atar asked.

Utarz glared at him. "If she's been kidnapped, then we need to go rescue her. If she's dead, we need to go fuck up the guy who killed her."

Zen looked at Utarz. While Tracer just seemed to be scared, Utarz was

downright furious. It was like someone had done him a great personal wrong.

"Why do you care?" Tracer asked bitterly.

"Oh, I don't know, **because she's my fucking sister, **maybe?!" Utarz shouted. "I wouldn't expect you to understand, because you're an only child!"

"Quiet! Both of you!" Atar yelled. "Before we started doing anything, we need some clues as to what might have happened."

"What kind of clues?" Repora asked.

"Oh, I don't know." Atar said. "Uhâ€| who was the last person to see her?"

"â€|That's probably me." Tracer said quietly.

Everyone looked at him.

"She talked to me last night." Tracer explained. "About an hour before I fell asleep-"

Utarz suddenly spun around and grabbed Tracer by the throat.

"What happened to her?!" Utarz snarled, completely oblivious that everyone else had suddenly pointed their weapons at him.

"What?!" Tracer choked.

"Are you crazy?!" Zen shouted. "Let him go!"

"Utarz!" Atar roared. "Let him go, now!"

"Can I kill him now?" Repora asked politely.

"Answer me, asshole!" Utarz shook Tracer violently.

"I don't know what happened to her!" Tracer managed to spit out. "She went back to the camp after I fell asleep! Let me go!"

Taking matters into his own hands, Zen punched Utarz to the ground. He let go of Tracer as he fell, who stumbled a bit before getting his bearings.

Zen jammed his needle rifle into Utarz's chest. "Stay down!"

Utarz growled, but complied.

After staring at Utarz oddly for a moment, Atar cleared his throat. "Uhâ€| continue, Tracer."

Tracer rubbed his neck. "Uhâ€| she talked to me while I was making some modifications to the Wraithâ€| and then she walked back to camp."

Atar snapped his fingers. "Of course! She must have been lured away from camp and kidnapped!"

"What makes you say she isn't dead?" Repora asked curiously.

"We'd see blood in the camp." Atar replied.

"So she's definitely been kidnapped?" Utarz asked from the ground.

"I'm positive." Atar confirmed.

"Then we need to go rescue her, right?" Zen asked, abandoning Utarz.

Atar hesitated. Then he said, "Miaraâ€| might have to save herself."

As he expected, this generated some general outrage among the others.

Utarz suddenly sprang up and shouted, "What?!"

Zen double blinked and said, "What?! But sir-!"

Tracer dropped his carbine in shock.

Repora chuckled in amusement at Utarz's reaction.

"The Heretics have clearly kidnapped her in order to try and make us slow down." Atar explained. "We cannot satisfy their desires."

"But she's one of us!" Zen cried.

"I know."

"Sir, with all due respect, we have to rescue Miara." Tracer said desperately. "If we didn't, then what kind of teammates are we?"

"Bad ones?" Repora suggested.

"Fine. Go ahead." Atar said. "Where do you propose we start looking?"

"All over the place!" Utarz yelled, standing up. "It's just one forest! It's shouldn't take too long to search the whole place!"

"That would take too long!" Atar snapped. "We need to get to that 'artefact' and destroy it before the Heretics get there first! Miara will have to wait."

"But-!"

"That's final!" Atar snarled. "I will not sacrifice this mission over one soldier! Half a squad, yes, but not one soldier!"

Everyone except Repora glared at him.

"I know that none of you like this decision." Atar sighed. "Trust me, neither do I. But this is the way it has to be. Now, let's get going."

"â€|I'll get the Wraith, sir." Tracer said despondently.

As the others walked off, Utarz stood there fuming for a moment before following suit.

Zen suddenly grabbed his shoulder. "Utarz, listen."

"Piss off." Utarz brushed his hand off.

Ignoring the last remark, Zen spun him around and snapped, "Listen, jackass! I understand that you're worried for Miara, but need to calm the fuck down, alright?"

Utarz glared at him. "I don't care if you're trying to comfort me or something, but let me tell you something." He leaned into his face. "You don't understand jack ****shit.****"

Utarz then stormed off.

Zen sighed, then looked at the camp. Miara's flamethrower was still lying there in the snow.

He walked over to it, picked it up and put it on his back.

* * *

><p>Author's notes

****And so, the drama begins.****

****Thank you all for waiting patiently.****

****Potato.****

13. Nice Try, But No

****The Halo Universe belongs to Microsoft Studios and 343 Industries. But these characters are my own creation and cannot be used without my permission. If you do use them without my permission, then Repora will post humiliating photos of you all over the internet so that you will spend the rest of your days in misery. Enjoy the show.****

* * *

><p>The Sangheili 800 Squad

****Chapter 12: Nice Try, But No****

* * *

><p>February, 2550 (Human Calender)

****0620 Hours****

****Heretic Chasm****

* * *

><p>Miara's eyes slowly opened.<p>

The very first thing she registered was that she had a headache. She couldn't quite put a finger on what had caused the headache at the moment, but she was sure it would come to her.

The next thing she noticed was that she was completely naked. This confused her. She was outside, not in bed, so why wasn't her armour on her?

Finally, she found that she was freezing and strangely warm at the same time.

Miara groaned and tried to sit up. She appeared to be in the shade of some rock or something whilst lying in the snow.

_Maybe this is Utarz's idea of a joke. _Miara thought fuzzily, moving to stand up.

As she did, her head touched something warm and squishy.

She froze, lowered herself, and turned around.

Behind her was a huge grey, metal mass, not a rock. And inside the mass were hundreds of sleeping, Lekgolo worms.

Miara jumped backwards, out of the Hunter's shade and into the sunlight which was slowly melting the snow. Once she had backed off, she became completely cold, which was probably due to the fact that she had no body warmth to rely on.

As she looked at the Hunter, she started to remember what had happened. It started with a vague memory of Tracer and Iro, then evolved into a memory of an ambush.

_Well, shit. _Miara thought bitterly.

Miara stood up and looked around her. She appeared to be in some sort of chasm with a bunch of small caves in both sides. Other than that, there was nothing special about her surroundings.

Miara walked back towards Tank. A bit away from him was Iro, clad in scarlet armour. The Grunt, Buzzsaw, was nowhere to be seen.

It occurred to Miara that in order for her to be naked right now, the Heretics would've had to take off her armour for her.

_Perverts! _Miara thought angrily.

First of all, Miara decided to find a weapon. With a weapon, she could figure out what to do. Even if it was just a plasma pistol.

Secondly, she needed her armour. While she couldn't change the internal temperature, the armour would generate enough heat to keep her alive. At it was, she would freeze to death if she tried to escape.

Miara walked over to Iro and looked around him. No guns or anything. Not even a stick.

She walked over to Tank and looked around.

He was sitting on two guns.

Miara looked around to see if there were any more guns about. When she couldn't find any, she slowly crept up to Tank.

She bent down to the guns. Desperately hoping that he wasn't a light sleeper, Miara reached for the closest weapon.

Suddenly, an invisible force slammed into her, knocking her to the ground. She sprawled in the snow, then sat up, looking around for her attacker.

"Sorry, lady." Buzzsaw chuckled, materialising. "But it ain't gonna be that easy."

Miara stood up, looking at Buzzsaw, whose blades had come out and started spinning.

The sound of the saws woke up Iro, who blinked for a moment before coming to his senses and standing up.

"Well." Iro said. "Someone's woken up."

Miara growled at him.

Tank woke up as well, although he did so a bit more violently. He spun around, snarling, before realising what was going on and calming down.

"So female is awake now." Tank deduced.

"Where is my armour?" Miara demanded.

Iro pointed to a large boulder. "Behind there. We'll let you get it if you like."

"How about you bring it to me?" Miara demanded.

Buzzsaw picked up his gun and pointed it at her. "You're not in a position to bargain."

"Easy, Buzzsaw." Iro said. "Miara, all you have to do is walk into that cave to get your armour. We don't have to get it for you."

"If I go in there, you'll just trap me in!" Miara snapped. "You go get it!"

"That's not happening." Iro picked up his pistol and placed it in his holster. "Get in there now, or we'll make you."

"Don't you dare touch me, perverts!" Miara growled.

"Tank." Iro turned to the grey behemoth. "Put her inside her room."

Tank held up his cannon arm, irritated. "No hand."

"â€|Oh." Iro turned to his next option. "Buzzsaw?"

"On it." Buzzsaw advanced with his saws getting closer to Miara. She didn't move, glaring at him.

"Oh, come on." Buzzsaw said. "You know as well as I do that this isn't something worth dying over."

Miara knew he was right. So, muttering something vicious under her breath, she walked over to the boulder.

Tank followed her, then slowly pushed the boulder aside. He turned to her and said, "Get in."

Miara walked inside, seeing her armour at the back. She turned to the Heretics and said, "My squad will find me!"

"Good." Iro said as Tank pushed the boulder back over the entrance. "It'll slow them down."

And suddenly Miara was drenched in darkness.

* * *

><p>February, 2550 (Human Calender)

1324 Hours

Frozen Forest

* * *

><p>The 800 Squad walked in silence.<p>

Usually, there would be insults, conversation and orders being given, but with Miara's disappearance, there was a sort of sobriety about.

Tracer had calmed down, but he was still upset about the whole thing. His conflicted feelings for Miara were currently battling it out with both sides being equally matched about it and it was giving him a headache. He didn't really know what kind of upset he was about her disappearance. He just knew that he wanted to rescue her.

Zen was upset to, although not as much as Tracer. What really angered him was the fact that they took Miara, a female. The males were supposed to treat the fairer sex with respect, and this was anything but respectful.

Utarz was still fuming about the fact that someone had dared to kidnap his sister. However, he was even angrier at Atar, who had completely refused to stage a rescue mission for someone who was probably the second best fighter on the team. Added to that, she was his _sister!_

Atar was pondering about whether he made the right choice. Sure, saving her would slow them down, but she was a teammate. If only they had a clue as to where she had gone. Then he could split the current team into two or something.

Repora was silently amused by the whole affair.

About half the day had passed before Atar gave the order to stop.

Tracer slowed down the Wraith and stepped out, rubbing his head. Utarz walked up to Atar and asked, "So, Atar, what's your brilliant plan now?"

"_General, or sir._" Atar snarled. "And my plan is to contact command."

"Contact command?" Zen asked. "But why?"

"And how?" Tracer added.

"I'll answer the why question first." Atar said. "Best to get the worst out of the way."

"Are we going to like the answer?" Repora asked.

"Most of you won't." Atar said. "I don't know about you though."

"Yay!" Repora jumped into the air like a video game character.

"Well, I want to ask for reinforcements." Atar explained. "We're low on soldiers at the moment."

"We still outnumber the Heretics." Zen pointed out.

"Yeah, but Utarz can't fight." Atar said. "I want at least a two-soldier advantage."

"So, let me get this straight." Utarz said. "What I'm getting from this is that you want to replace Miara."

"Basically." Atar confirmed.

"I fucking hate you." Utarz muttered.

"Sir, I really don't like the moral implications of your plan." Tracer said. "I mean, if Miara knew, she'd probably kill us."

"No she won't." Repora said cheerfully. "Because if she knew, she would know that we're being forced to take orders and the only one she'd be mad at would be Atar."

"I still don't like the idea." Tracer said.

"Neither do I." Atar said. "But we must keep an advantage over the Heretics! Otherwise, we'll never be able to defeat them!"

"Okay then." Utarz folded his arms. "So how exactly are you going to talk to command? We don't have a radio."

Atar turned to Tracer. "Tracer, did the Phantom have a long-range radio?"

"No, sir." Tracer replied. "Only the base."

Atar then turned to Utarz. "In that case, I'm going to have to relieve you of your Ghost temporarily."

"Are you kidding me?" Utarz asked incredulously. "You're actually willing to take a three-day trip back to the SSMB just to call for one guy?"

"It won't take three days." Atar corrected. "Your Ghost will provide me with the speed necessary to make it there in a significantly shorter amount of time."

"How shorter?" Zen asked.

"Well, considering that the Ghost is much faster than us on foot," Tracer thought out loud. "And it took us approximately three days to get here, soâ€¦ he should make it in about one and a half days."

"Excellent." Atar said. "That's half the time! And when I get back, we'll be able to defeat the Heretics at their own game!"

"What's their game?" Repora asked.

"â€¦I dunno."

"So, we'll just stay here while you get reinforcements?" Zen asked.

"Negative." Atar replied. "You lot will have to advance without me."

"How come?"

"Because we can't afford to lose any ground!" Atar declared. "We must get there before the Heretics no matter what!" Atar walked over to the Ghost and climbed on it. "By the time I get back, I expect us to be on the edge of the crash site. Understand?"

"Yes sir." Tracer said.

"Yes sir." Zen acknowledged.

"Okie dokie!" Repora chirped.

"Fine." Utarz grumbled.

"Good!" Atar powered up the Ghost and sped off. "Make sure that no-one dies!"

The 800 Squad stood there for a bit, watching Atar disappear through the path of destroyed trees.

"Well, no sense just waiting around." Repora said enthusiastically. "Let's get moving!"

Tracer climbed into the Wraith, muttering, "I really don't understand how he can remain so cheerful."

Utarz grumbled and followed as the Wraith started to pave through another few hundred trees.

* * *

><p>"So, why does Tank have to stay again?" Buzzsaw asked.<p>

"Someone needs to look after the female while we go get the artefact." Iro explained. "That way, we can keep her alive as a bargaining chip."

"Makes sense, I suppose." Buzzsaw said. "And Tank is the most imposing out of all of us."

"Tank will make sure female does not escape." Tank nodded. "What must Tank do?"

"Generally? Keep her alive." Iro said. "Give her food when she's hungry, water when she's thirsty and take her to that narrow cave over there when she needs to go to the toilet."

"Sounds like taking care of a pet." Buzzsaw remarked.

"Toilet?" Tank asked uncomfortably.

"Just turn your back to her when she's doing it." Iro said.

"Right."

"So, any updates on Gears?" Buzzsaw asked.

"No." Iro replied. "He'll show up when he's ready."

"So it'll just be the two of us." Buzzsaw said.

"It'll just be the five of them."

"I guess. Shall we go?"

"Yes." Iro turned to Tank as he and Buzzsaw walked off. "Make sure to repel any intruders that come by."

Tank nodded. Iro and Buzzsaw then left the ravine

After about fifteen minutes, Buzzsaw asked, "Soâ€| when the 800 guys show up, do you think Tank would be able to beat all five of them?"

"I don't doubt it." Iro replied. "Tank can easily hold them up."

"I guess. But they won't underestimate him this time."

"True. But I don't believe that Tank will fall to them."

They walked forward, following the marker Iro had placed on their HUDs before they left on the trip.

As they walked, Iro was convinced that the path to the artefact was now a relatively straightforward one. The 800 Squad would surely rescue their teammate if they truly valued her as a fellow soldier. Soon, they would be able to spread the truth about the Covenant once again.

Buzzsaw, however, was more alert. As such, he was the first to hear the voices.

"Do you think they might split into groups?" Buzzsaw asked.

"No. They know that they won't stand a chance unless they have a full team." Iro replied.

"You absolutely sure?"

"Of course."

"You don't think that they would split into groups of two and three?"

"No, I don't." Iro said irritably. "Why?"

"Because that sounds like about three people over there." Buzzsaw pointed into the forest.

Iro blinked and listened hard. Now that Buzzsaw had mentioned it, he heard the voices too. They seemed to be aggressive voices. On top of that, they were familiar voices.

Iro put a finger to his mouth to indicate silence, to which Buzzsaw nodded. They crept towards the source of the noise, with Iro quickly climbing up a tree and into the top while Buzzsaw went invisible.

Iro stared at the source.

There were four of them.

"We could just go find her right now!" Utarz yelled at Zen. "No one is stopping us!"

"We have our orders, Utarz!" Zen shouted back. "We're not disobeying them!"

"Why not, huh?! She's one of us! Our teammate, my sister! We can't just leave her!"

"Look, we don't even know where she is, alright? We ****can't ****rescue her! What must I do to get you to understand that?"

_Hold onâ€¦| they're not rescuing her?! _Iro thought to himself.

"I reckon we should scan the crime scene, you know?" Repora added to the conversation. "Find clues as to where she's gone."

"We've tried that already." Zen said to Repora. "All we can do is follow Atar's last order."

"What, do you seriously think that Atar knows what's best?" Utarz

asked angrily.

"Yes." Zen said firmly.

Utarz exhaled heavily. Then, he said in a slightly calmer voice, "Zen. Atar is an idiot. Just like me."

Zen glared at him. "How so?"

"How so?" Utarz brought up fingers to count with. "He insisted that we build a watchtower when no-one ever attacks us, he has brain damage from falling off of a cliff, he actually believes that this 'artefact' is something so important that we can't stop to rescue our friend and he knows that the four of us can't stand up against the three of them."

"We have Repora." Zen pointed out.

"Oh, now you're placing your bets on a lunatic?"

"I'm a maniac, not a lunatic." Repora corrected.

"What's the difference?!" Utarz demanded.

"**This **is a lunatic." Repora said. Suddenly, he started shouting gibberish that sounded a bit like, "Abugraba! Jeporsk aslkd fmasofsk! Feirlaskdmfliasldkfjaksdlicmelisldkfm!"

The other three stared at him blankly as he started jumping up and down, crouching, then springing up, humping the ground and a tree, doing a backflip and then did a little spasm, all the while sprouting nonsensical noises.

Then he stopped and looked at the others. "See?"

"â€|Right, whatever!" Utarz resumed the argument. "My point is that we shouldn't follow Atar's every order to the letter!"

"It hasn't worked out too bad so far." Zen said.

"We're down a teammate, and you call that not bad?!"

"Well, it could be worse!" Zen argued. "I mean, if you were in charge, we would've died already!"

"That's not the point!" Utarz shouted. "The point is that-"

BLAM

A green round zipped in between the space between Utarz's and Zen's faces.

Then they turned around to look at the source of the bullet.

"Sorry, but that was the only way to shut you two up." Tracer said.

"What's your input?" Utarz asked. "Surely, you don't agree with him, do you?"

"Well, he can't exactly agree with you, can he?" Zen said aggressively.

"I agree with both of you." Tracer replied.

"Huh?" Zen and Utarz chorused.

"We're not going to abandon our own." Tracer said. "That much I know. But at the same time, we can't just ignore Atar's command."

"So, what do you propose?" Zen asked.

"I'm saying that we split into groups of three and one." Tracer explained. "One of us will go find Miara while the other three continue."

"But then we'll be even more vulnerable."

"Yeah, but think about it. Miara's probably unarmed. She wouldn't need much, if any, security. The Heretics probably would've left one of their own behind while the other two went to find the artefact."

"So it'll be one against one and three against two." Utarz said.

"Pretty much." Tracer confirmed.

"I don't know about this," Zen said. "We'll only outnumber them by one and the person going up against just the one."

"If we split into groups of two, we'll have a better chance of rescuing Miara, but we won't get to the artefact." Tracer said. "It'll be the same if just one guy went to get to the artefact. Trust me, this is the best solution."

"Alright," Zen reluctantly agreed. "So, who's going to find Miara?"

Predictably, Utarz immediately said, "Me!"

"Why would we send you?" Tracer asked. "You're a terrible soldier."

"Yeah, but Miara's my sister, alright? So I'm rescuing her."

Zen looked at Utarz quizzically. He seemed to never really care about anyone, yet he seemed to be extremely defensive of his sister.

Tracer clearly didn't want to send Utarz. "I don't know," Zen would be a much better choice."

"You'll need me if you want to go up against two Heretics." Zen pointed out. "We'll need Repora too, as he's the only one with the explosives."

"C12 demolition explosives, to be precise." Repora added.

"So what? I should go?" Tracer said in disbelief.

"Well, you are a doctor." Zen said. "You'll be able to heal her if she's hurt."

"I'm a _medic_" Tracer snapped. "Not a doctor!"

"Fine, medic, whatever."

Utarz cleared his throat, prompting everyone to look at him.

"Okay, listen." Utarz said. "I don't actually care what you guys say, I'm still gonna be the one to go, alright? I don't give a shit about what you agree on."

Tracer sighed. "Alright, fine, you go. But avoid direct confrontation no matter what, okay?"

"Yeah, yeah." Utarz then turned to a random direction.

"Where are you going?" Repora asked.

"I dunno, I just think that I should search everywhere. She can't be far."

"And maintain radio silence unless completely necessary!" Tracer added as Utarz walked off.

"Fine, whatever!" Utarz called back.

When Utarz had left, Zen turned to the other two. "Wellâ€¦ shall we continue on?"

"Yup." Tracer jumped into the Wraith. "That took a weight off my chest."

"You know Utarz is going to fail, right?" Repora said.

"Don't say that!" Tracer said before closing the hatch.

The Wraith started to move forward, pushing down trees in its path. Zen and Repora followed close behind, not looking back.

Once they couldn't hear the Wraith anymore, Iro jumped down from the tree and Buzzsaw materialised in the middle of the path.

"This wasn't meant to happen." Iro muttered.

"No duh." Buzzsaw glared at him. "Any more bright ideas?"

"Just getting to the artefact before they do." Iro replied. "Tank'll be able to hold his own against Utarz in the off chance that he does get found."

"What about their commander?" Buzzsaw pointed out. "We don't know where he's gotten to."

"We can't worry about that." Iro replied. "We just have to get to the artefact first."

"Should we at least warn Tank?" Buzzsaw asked.

At this, Iro chuckled. "Tank's expecting a squad. All he'll get is a scout."

* * *

<p>Thanks for watching.

Potato.

14. Finders, Losers

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* * *

<p>The Sangheili 800 Squad

Chapter 13: Finders, Losers

* * *

<p>February, 2550 (Human Calendar)

1339 Hours

Frozen Forest

* * *

<p>It was about ten minutes after they left Utarz that Repora spoke up.</p>

"So Tracerâ€¦ you think he'll do it?" He asked.

Tracer, since he was in the Wraith, didn't hear him.

So Repora activated his radio. "Oi, Tracer."

"Repora!" Tracer snapped. "We have to maintain radio silence, remember?"

"Oh please, no-one's gonna hack into this." Repora scoffed.

"You never know! They might listen to us discussing plans or something and take advantage of it!"

"You sound like Atar." Repora commented. "Why'd we discuss plans on our radio?"

"I don't know, it's just a possible situation! Now turn off your radio!"

"But then how will I talk to you? You can't hear me while you're in the Wraith, and we can't stop to talk either."

"Have you considered not talking to him?" Zen asked.

"No." Repora said. "Why?"

"Turn your radio off!" Tracer said angrily.

"Fine." Repora muttered, deactivating his radio. "Some people just can't grasp the art of conversation."

About fifteen minutes passed as they walked behind the path of carnage that the Wraith was creating.

Then Repora did it again. "Are we in a better mood?"

"REPORA!"

"Look, I'm just gonna keep doing this until you answer my question." Repora said.

"Fine." Tracer muttered. "What's your question?"

"Do you think that Utarz'll do it?"

"What, rescue Miara?" Tracer asked.

"Yeah."

"To be honest? No."

Zen stopped walking. "Wait, what?"

Knowing that Zen had stopped, Tracer kept moving regardless. "I don't believe that Utarz will actually rescue Miara. If anything, he'll probably just get himself captured as well. Atar was right. Miara has to save herself."

"What?!" Zen said angrily.

Tracer sighed impatiently. "Look, remember our code of honour? The part regarding getting captured by the enemy?"

Zen double blinked. "What? Ohâ€¦"

"Oh, that's right!" Repora said cheerfully. "'If you get captured by the enemy, then you have to find a way to free yourself. Otherwise, you have lost your honour and you must immediately kill yourself.' How could I forget?"

"Yeah, I forgot as well." Zen muttered, running to catch up. "Dunno why."

"Probably because Miara's one of the nicest people here." Tracer replied. "I only just remembered as well."

"And Atar's the only one who remembered." Zen said. "So then we shouldn't've sent Utarz to rescue her."

"Actually, when I remembered about the code, I realised that Utarz

was the perfect choice for this." Tracer said. "He's useless as a soldier, so he'll just slow us down and he has no chance of rescuing Miara, so he'll just get captured as well. So it's effectively a way of getting rid of our worst soldier."

"Huh." Zen said. "That's convenient."

"I dunno." Repora said doubtfully. "It seems too convenient to me. Almost as if the author realised he had made a mistake in Sangheili behaviour, so he came up with some stupid reason for the story to not conflict with established Halo canon."

Zen stared at Repora blankly for a moment.

"And he must've also wanted a pointless fourth wall break." Repora added.

Zen shook his head. "You know, I really want to know exactly what goes on inside that head of yours."

Repora chuckled. "No, you don't."

* * *

><p>"Well, shit." Utarz grumbled. "I was going somewhere with this."<p>

Utarz had spent the past ten minutes wandering aimlessly in the forest, hoping to find Miara via blind luck. Unfortunately, this plan had gone down the drain almost immediately, so that wasn't working. And Utarz didn't have a backup plan, so he had basically gotten himself lost for no reason at all.

Which sucked.

_Okay Utarz, think. _Utarz thought to himself. _Miara can't be that hard to find. I mean, she won't just be in the middle of nowhere, there'd have to be a place where the Heretics are keeping her, like a super-secret base or something._

Utarz looked up. _But I can't find something like that from down here. Maybe if I climbed one of the treesâ€¦|_

Really hoping that the things would be able to hold his weight, Utarz jumped up and grabbed one of the branches.

It broke.

Utarz hit the ground and groaned in annoyance. He looked around for a large rock or something, but there was nothing. Just the same flat, empty forest. Not even any big hills.

Utarz looked around for another tree, preferably one with thicker branches. They all appeared to be the same though. All thin and easily broken.

Easily brokenâ€¦|

Utarz had a sudden brainwave. If the Wraith could plough through these things at its slowest speed, then maybe he had a chance at knocking

one over. He could then use that as a sort of ramp to climb to the top of one of the other trees.

Utarz turned to one of the trees and kicked it with all his strength.

It broke, but it also hurt Utarz's foot like hell. He cursed and waved it a bit before looking at his handiwork.

_Ha! _He thought smugly. _Bet Tracer couldn't've done that!_

It wasn't where he wanted it though, so Utarz had to go over to the fallen log, pick it up and place it against another tree. It was surprisingly heavy, so Utarz had to call upon some forgotten muscle mass in order to complete his task.

Once that was done, Utarz panted for a bit, trying to get his energy back.

Then he slowly climbed up the log, hoping that it wouldn't snap it half and send him plummeting back to the ground.

Thankfully, it held so that Utarz could get to the top and look around.

At first, he was bitterly disappointed. The skyline was pretty much more of the same. Just treetops in the immediate area.

Then he was surprised by the mountain range. He had never noticed a gigantic line of mountains in the entire time that he had been stationed at the SSMB. Although, he had been in a crater.

Then he saw a line of trees falling over in the distance. He assumed that it was due to the Wraith. Although, he was slightly confused by the lack of trees to the east that wasn't in the path of the Wraith.

_Maybe that's where Miara is. _Utarz thought. _It's a long shot, but I don't see any Forerunner shit anywhere, so that rules out secret bases._

CRACK

Utarz froze, then looked at the branches he was resting on.

"Ah, fuck." Utarz muttered before falling to the ground.

* * *

><p>"Well, I can't say I'm surprised that they chose not to save her." Iro said to Buzzsaw as they walked.<p>

Buzzsaw raised an eyebrow. "What do you mean?"

"Code of honour." Iro said. "If you're caught by the enemy, you have to get out by yourself."

This made no sense to Buzzsaw. "So why did you kidnap her if you knew that they wouldn't help her?"

"I didn't." Iro replied. "I thought they would be stupid enough to ignore the code."

"Oh." Buzzsaw continued walking. "Well, they weren't."

"Unfortunately." Iro sighed. "Looks like we're back at square one. We'll have to come up with another plan."

"Don't you mean you'll have to come up with a different plan?" Buzzsaw corrected. "If I recall, you usually come up with the plan, and then you send me to actually put the plan into motion."

"And I do a good job of it, too." Iro replied. "I mean, when was the last time that one of my plans didn't work?"

"Fifteen minutes ago." Buzzsaw replied.

"â€|Okay." Iro muttered. "So we need a new plan."

"Well, we can't get in front of them without dealing with their tank." Buzzsaw said. "So we should be moving forward when they're sleeping."

"You mean when we need to sleep."

"Well what's your plan?"

"Hmâ€|" Iro was thinking quickly. "Well, you're right. We can't get in front without dealing with the Wraith, so we might have to go for sabotageâ€|"

"What kind of sabotage?"

"Well, they can't hurt the artefact with a Wraith blast. They'd need more powerful explosives."

"So maybe one of them has these explosives." Buzzsaw said.

"Yeahâ€|" Iro said. "Question is, which one has them?"

"Repora. Remember? He mentioned having the bombs with him back when they sent off Utarz."

"Ah, yes." Iro said. "Repora."

Then it hit him.

"Ohâ€| Repora."

"What?" Buzzsaw asked. "What's so bad about Repora?"

"â€|He was a ratherâ€| infamous serial killer back on Sanghelios." Iro explained. "He would go to a Kaidon's housing, attack the Kaidon with no warning or explanation, defeat him in battle, and then kill him."

"â€|Oh." Buzzsaw suddenly felt like he was intruding on something. "How'd he kill them?"

"Slowly." Iro shuddered.

"Yikes." Buzzsaw mumbled. "Wait, how do you know this?"

"He would record the whole event with either audio or video." Iro said. "Sometimes, he would somehow know and talk to the person watching or listening to itâ€| His crimes made the news headlines a lot."

"That's messed."

"Indeed."

"Wonder what made him do that."

"I don't know, but whatever happened to him made him a killer since childhood."

"Since he was a kid?!" Buzzsaw exclaimed. "He's been doing that stuff since he was a kid?! How the hell did he manage to get into the army?!"

"I don't know. Maybe the Prophets were doped up or something."

"So how exactly are we going to do something about this guy?"

Iro sighed. "I'll figure something out."

"Okay, there, again." Buzzsaw said. "You sighed again. How exactly do you do that if you can't blow?"

"â€|Shut up."

* * *

><p>1426 Hours

****Heretic Chasm****

* * *

><p>"Oi!" Miara yelled at the boulder blocking her way back to her teammates. "Big guy!"<p>

Miara waited a few seconds before she heard a noncommittal grunt on the other side.

"I need some fresh air!" Miara added. "I can't survive on stale cave air forever."

"You went to toilet thirty minutes ago." Tank pointed out.

"Look, you can guard me, but just let me breathe proper air for a moment, okay?"

There was some silence before Tank groaned in defeat. "FINE."

Miara waited until Tank had pushed the boulder aside before she made a run for it.

She had already tried this strategy before, however, so Tank knew what to do and just moved his shield in front of her.

Miara quickly stopped to avoid getting hit by it again.

Tank pointed his cannon arm at her. "Breathe fresh air. Two minutes."

Miara gave him a look of contempt and stepped outside.

She wasn't lying. She really did need the fresh air. She breathed deeply.

There. Much better than the cave air.

Miara looked around. The cliffs didn't seem to have many footholds or handholds, so climbing didn't seem to be an option. The only way out appeared to be the natural ramp that lead back up to ground level.

She could just run away, but she reckoned that Tank could just blow her up without any trouble at all. Miara didn't exactly want to end her life at the moment.

Maybe she could convince him to let her goâ€¦

Picking her words carefully, Miara said, "You don't seem to be particularly thrilled about your job."

This was true. Tank didn't exactly want to play babysitter while the others went to get the artefact. In response, he grunted.

Taking that as an agreement, Miara continued. "So why are you doing this?"

This was an easy one for Tank. He said, "Tank must do what is necessary."

"Well, why can't someone else do it?" Miara asked. "I mean, your talents are best suited toâ€¦ other thingsâ€¦ right?"

"Tank may not sound like it, but Tank is not stupid." Tank said bluntly.

Faking ignorance, Miara asked, "What are you talking about?"

"Two minutes are up."

"What? No it hasn't."

"Get back in cave."

Miara sighed in defeat and walked back into the cave. Tank followed her to the entrance, waited for her to get inside, then rolled the boulder back over the entrance, making sure that there was a slit to allow her to breathe.

Miara hated this. It was awful. She needed to get out.

She knew the others wouldn't rescue her, as per the code of honour,

so she had to rely on her own devices. Unfortunately, she didn't really have any, so she had to think of something else.

She needed a gun. She needed something to defend herself with. That way, she'd be able to stand a chance. As it was, she had no way to free herself.

If she had a second person with her, she might be able to plan something around that. But she was the only one here.

She needed to think this through.

Tank, meanwhile, had decided that Miara had a point.

He was not enjoying this job. He had joined Iro's team to bring the Prophets to justice, not be a prison guard. He wanted action, and action didn't translate to turning his back while some Sangheili peed behind him.

But it was necessary. And Iro told him to.

If Iro told Tank to do something, Tank would damn well do it. Iro was the smartest of them all, which was why he was leader. Iro was the one who would lead them to victory against the Covenant.

Eventually, anyway.

They needed more people to join them, which was why they had tried so hard to get Zen on their side. He could've convinced the whole squad to join them.

Unfortunately, fate said otherwise.

Tank looked around. He was bored. He wanted to do something.

He could go for a walk. Miara wasn't going anywhere. Even if the others showed up, they wouldn't have the strength to push the boulder.

Then again, Repora had explosives. He could blast open the rock. Then Miara would escape and the whole incident would be Tank's fault.

So he had to stay.

Tank grumbled and looked around. He was starting to hate this chasm already.

A sudden glint of light caught Tank's eye. He looked up at the top of the cliff, but it disappeared the moment he saw it.

He looked at the cliff for a few moments before settling back down.

* * *

><p>2201 Hours

Near the Wraith

* * *

><p>"Okay, okay, okay!" Repora suddenly ran in front of the Wraith.
"Stopstopstop!"<p>

Tracer stopped, climbed out of the Wraith and glared at Repora.
"What?"

"Can we like, stop for tonight?" Repora asked. "We've been walking for hours."

"We have much more ground to cover." Tracer replied.

"So? We can afford to stop for more than four hours."

"Repora has a point." Zen said. "I think we should pause for tonight and then continue early in the morning."

"The Heretics could get a lead!" Tracer argued.

"I doubt it." Zen replied. "They're probably just as tired as we are."

"Yeah!" Repora supported. "Let's just stop for now and continue later!"

Tracer sighed. "Fine."

"Yay!" Repora jumped into the air and then walked off. "I'm gonna go find a nice piece of log!"

Zen watched him go. Then he looked up at Tracer. "You know, you could be a good leader if you wanted to."

"What makes you say that?" Tracer asked, turning to him.

"Well, for a start, you're a smart guy." Zen said. "Are you a good strategist?"

"I like to think so."

"Well, all leaders need to be good strategists. So that's one area checked off."

"Uh, huh."

"You're also reasonable." Zen added. "A good leader needs to be reasonable."

"Which is probably why we're going to shit." Tracer muttered.

"And you have good co-operation skills." Zen said.

"With whom?"

"Well, with me and Miara and€ and€"

"That's where the co-operation ends." Tracer said. "I don't work well with idiots."

"Idiots?"

"You know. People who aren't as smart as me."

Zen stared at him. "Like?"

"Well, I'm not saying that I'm a genius." Tracer said modestly. "I just don't get along well with people like Utarz and Repora and Atar."

"What's wrong with Atar?"

"I dunno, he's just hard to deal with." Tracer replied. "I mean, he's a good person, it's just that I think that a good leader would let command deal with this."

"I guess I can see that." Zen said. "I mean, splitting into these groups isn't exactly a brilliant move."

"Yeah," Tracer said. "I just think that a group of professionals would be better trained to handle this."

Zen looked at Tracer oddly. "Don't you want to handle this?"

"This isn't cowardice, if that's what you're thinking." Tracer said quickly. "It's just that combat isn't really my strong suit and I don't want to let the team down."

Zen chuckled. "Relax. Utarz is much more capable of that."

"Hey guys!"

Zen and Tracer turned to see Repora coming back into view with a giant, hollowed out log.

"Look what I found!" He said excitedly, putting it on the ground. "It's nice and warm and it only has sixteen spiders in it! It's perfect!"

"Yeah." Zen said. "Perfect. What do we get to sleep in?"

* * *

><p>Utarz looked over the ravine. The Hunter was still in front of the cave entrance. Good news was that he was now sound asleep.<p>

Utarz had decided to wait until night so that he wouldn't be seen, but now that the opportunity presented itself, he was having trouble deciding what to do next. He knew for a fact that he couldn't push the boulder away. He wasn't strong enough to lift a Plasma Turret.

Maybe there was like a weak spot somewhere and he just had to shoot it or something. He didn't know that his Plasma Rifle could do that, but what else did he have?

Utarz picked up the rifle and looked at it. He had never shot the thing in his life. It was a gift from his dad. He didn't want to shoot it. But hey, first time for everything, right?

Actually, how the hell did one shoot this thing anyway? Utarz looked at the gun. He'd never bothered to figure out how it actually worked. He started touching random places on the gun, trying to figure out how it shot.

CET-CHOW

A blue bolt of plasma shot out the front and zoomed down the canyon. Utarz watched as it arched downwards and hit the Hunter in the head.

It woke up violently, swinging its shield around and hitting the boulder with incredible force.

Utarz could hear the crack it made as the boulder developed a large jagged line down the middle.

The Hunter froze, apparently horrified by what it had done. Then it remembered that something hot had hit its head, so it looked up at the source.

Utarz backed up quickly to avoid being seen. Now the Hunter was awake and alert.

Now what?

Utarz crept up and looked at the Hunter. It looked around, then decided to search the area. It lumbered away to the earthen ramp, apparently wanting to search where the round had come from.

Once it was halfway across the ravine, Utarz took his chance. He put his rifle in the holster climbed over the edge and started climbing down.

When Utarz had started, Tank was at the base of the ramp. When Utarz hit the bottom, Tank was at the top.

Utarz ran over to the boulder and looked at the impressive crack in the boulder. He was surprised that the rock hadn't split into two, although he expected that another blow like that to do the trick.

Hoping, but doubting, that the plasma bolt would be enough, Utarz reached for his rifle and shot at it a few times.

Nothing happened.

"Oh, come on." Utarz muttered, hitting the boulder with the rifle. "Break, goddammit!"

Deciding to go for a different approach, Utarz backed up, intending to kick the boulder with his foot.

As he did, he hit something made of out metal.

Utarz spun around and came face-to-face with Tank.

"How the ****fuck ****did you get down here so quickly?!" Utarz exclaimed. "Actually, how did I not hear you?!"

Tank pointed his cannon at Utarz and growled. "Put weapon down."

Utarz slowly put his gun on the ground. "Okay. Are we cool?" He asked slowly.

Tank advanced around to the boulder and gently pushed it aside, keeping his gun on Utarz all the while.

Miara was standing in the middle of the little cave, glaring at the entrance. When she saw Utarz, she double-blinked.

_Oh, great. _Utarz thought bitterly. _So much for a rescue._

"Get in." Tank ordered.

Utarz walked inside the cave to Miara. Once he was inside, Tank gingerly rolled the boulder back over the entrance and they were both drenched in darkness.

Miara opened her mandibles a bit.

"No." Utarz raised a hand in extreme annoyance. "Not a single word."

15. Ideas, Ideas

****The Halo Universe belongs to Microsoft Studios and 343 Industries. But these characters are my own creation and cannot be used without my permission. If you do use them without my permission, then Miara will burn out your eye with your own cigarette, even if you don't smoke. Enjoy the show.****

* * *

><p>The Sangheili 800 Squad

****Chapter 14: Ideas, Ideas****

* * *

><p>February, 2550 (Human Calender)

****0502 Hours****

****Frozen Forest****

* * *

><p>As Tracer drove in front of the group, knocking down trees, he wondered whether he should call Utarz just to see how he was doing. He did say to maintain radio silence, but Tracer needed to know whether Utarz had ruined Miara's honour or not.<p>

There was a small problem though.

"_There is no-one on your squad with the name, 'Utarse'. Would you like to add someone named 'Utarse'?"_

"No!" Tracer snapped. "U-_tarz. _Not Utarse!"

"_Available options are 'yes' and 'no'."_

"NO!"

"_Noted. What is your request?"_

"_Call_ Utarz_" Tracer said, very clearly and very aggravated.

"_There is no command labelled 'fall'."_

"Call!" Tracer yelled. "Call Utarz!"

"_There is no-one on your squad with the name, 'Call Utarz'. Would you-?"_

Tracer switched off his radio.

Outside the Wraith, Repora jogged up to Zen. "Hey, uh, Zen?"

"Yeah?"

"How much longer do you think this'll take?"

"What, the mission?"

"Yeah."

"_I'd give it about two or three more days."

"_not long?"

"Yeah."

"So what's the point of Atar getting another soldier if by the time he gets here, we'll be done with the mission?"

Zen shrugged.

Tracer opened up the Wraith and looked at Zen. "Hey Zen!"

Zen looked up. "Yeah?"

"Could you radio Utarz? Just to make sure that he failed?"

"I thought that we needed to maintain radio silence?"

"Fuck that." Repora said. "Even if the Heretics did hack into our communications, they couldn't do anything with what we said."

"Good point." Zen switched on his radio.

"_Hello." _A nice, female voice said. _"Thank you for using the RDIO Communications System. What would you like to do?"_

"_Zen didn't really know what to do. "What can you do?"_

"_That is not a registered command. Would you like to try again?"_

"Oh. Uhâ€¦"

"_Most used commands are: call, add and ignore. Please say the command you want to use."_

As a whole bunch of trees fell over, Zen said, "Call."

There was a slight pause.

"_That is not a registered command. Would you like to try again?"_

"What? I said call!"

"_That is not a registered command. Would you like to try again?"_

Zen looked at Repora. "Is this a joke?"

"No." He said wistfully. "RDIO isn't really a complex AI. I keep telling everyone that she might be a bit more useful if we let her become self-awareâ€¦"

"Call." Zen said forcefully.

This time, RDIO got what he said. "_Who would you like to call?"_

Before another tree could fall down, Zen quickly said, "Utarz!"

"_Calling Utarzâ€¦"_

Zen waited a while for a response.

"_I'm sorry, but squad member 'Utarz' is unable to reply. His signal cannot be found."_

"Uh, huhâ€¦" Zen said. "Call Tracer."

Slight pause.

"_There is no-one on your squad called 'Tracer'. Would you like to try again?"_

Zen blinked. Then he said, "Call Trac".

"_Calling Trac."_

Zen waited another while.

Then Tracer's voice came through. "You know, you could just talk to me."

"Then we'd have to stop, or yell." Zen replied.

"True. Did you get through to him?"

"No. It said that Utarz's signal couldn't be found."

"Huhâ€¦ then he probably got captured as well."

"You think so?"

"Well it's either that, or he's dead."

"Which alternative is preferred?"

"Apparently his dad thinks highly of him, so, captured."

"He does?" Zen asked. "How come?"

"Hell if I know. Not my business to intrude."

"Okay."

An idea popped into Tracer's mind. "Hey, could you call Atar? See how he's doing?"

"Sure." Zen hung up. Then, to RDIO, he said, "Call Atar."

CRASH

"_That is not a registered command. Would you like to try again?"_

"Callâ€¦ Atar."

"_Calling Atar."_

A few seconds later, Zen heard his commander's voice. "This is General Atar of the Sangheili 800 Squad. Who's this?"

"Zen, sir." Zen said.

"Zen! What's wrong? Have you run into trouble?"

"No, sir. We just want to see how you're going."

"Well, I'm not far from the base. I should be there by tomorrow."

"Right." Zen said. "Good to hear, sir."

"How's the mission going?"

"Good, sir. We should be at the crash site in two or three days."

"Excellent! So by then, not only would we have shown those Heretics who's really the incompetent ones, but we'll have an extra teammate who can help us out with the base! It's a win-win!"

"Right."

"And the rest of the team? Has Miara escaped yet?"

"No, sir, not yet. Although we think Utarz got captured."

"Wonderful! This day keeps getting better and better!"

"Right. Well, sir, I'll leave you to it then."

"Good. I'll radio you lot when I've reached the base! Atar out."

Atar hung up. Zen also decided to turn off his radio.

"Well, that sounded positive." Repora said happily. "This mission will be over in no time!"

"How do you know? You weren't even talking to Atar."

"Oh, you had your volume turned up high."

"â€|Oh."

* * *

><p>0543 Hours

Utarz & Miara's Prison

* * *

><p>Miara guessed that the others had simply wanted to get rid of Utarz. She got this vibe because she knew that if there was anyone who could fuck up badly, it was Utarz.<p>

She and Utarz had spent most of the morning arguing. She wanted to know why and how he got himself captured and he wanted nothing more than to completely forget about it.

Eventually, she started looking for a way to escape while Utarz banged his head against the wall.

This produced an irritating noise, so after a few minutes of it, she turned around and snapped, "Will you stop that?!"

"No." Utarz replied.

"Seriously, stop it." Miara growled. "You could help me get out of here rather than give yourself more brain damage than you already have."

"Geahgeahgeahgeah!" Utarz said angrily, holding up a hand to shut her up. "I'm thinking."

Then he started hitting his head again.

A few seconds later, he stopped and rubbed his head. "Okayâ€|okayâ€|"

"What?"

"I have a plan." Utarz said.

"Oh, this oughta be goodâ€|" Miara muttered.

"Relax, I saw this in a book once!" Utarz insisted. He bent down to the ground and picked up a small rock. "Right, you see this?"

"Yes."

"This is me, okay? And thisâ€|" He picked up a larger rock. "This is the Hunter."

"He has a name."

"I don't give a shit. This rockâ€|" He held up another small rock. "â€|Is you. Right?"

"No." Miara said sarcastically. "I'm here."

Ignoring her, Utarz continued. "So, we get let out every so often to take a crap, right? Well, we'll say that we need to go, then when Tank opens the doorâ€| or boulderâ€| then I'll dash out and circle around him. K?"

"Yeahâ€|" Miara nodded, wanting to see where he was going with this.

"Right, so while I'm doing that, you run for it and get back to the others. Then I'll grab the gun, escape with you, and we're done!"

"What's to stop Tank from shooting me while you get the gun?" Miara asked. "In fact, what's to stop him from shooting me at any time?"

"Wellâ€|"

"I mean, you obviously have a lower priority than me. Tank will probably ignore you. Actually, Tank will probably just swat you away. How close do you plan on-?"

"Alright, alright!" Utarz threw away the rocks, annoyed. "So what's your idea, Miss Brilliant?"

"Something less idiotic." Miara muttered.

"Really? So what is it?"

"I'mâ€| biding my time."

"So you're working on it."

"Maybe."

"So you don't have a plan."

"I'll think of something."

"Can't we just call the others or something? I mean, that's not

technically rescueâ€¦ is it?"

"Yes, it is." Miara replied. "And we couldn't do that anyway. Try turning on your radio."

Utarz did and immediately heard static.

"Huh." He said.

"Yeah, radio waves have a hard time going through solid rock."

"So we have to rely on ourselves."

"Pretty much. So let's try to think of a plan that doesn't suck, okay?"

"Hey, I'm doing my best over here."

"You're killing your brain cells." Miara replied. "So how about you actually try to help, huh?"

"How? By suggesting ideas?"

"Yeah. I'd prefer it if you tried to think along Tracer's lines."

"Yeah, I'm not Tracer. I don't know how Tracer thinks."

"Just try." Miara replied.

Utarz sighed.

Then he walked over to the boulder and rapped it a few times. "Oi! I need to take a leak."

A barely audible groan could be heard on the other side.

* * *

><p>Ten minutes later

Track to the crash site

* * *

><p>Iro and Buzzsaw were walking down the path when Iro got an idea.<p>

"Buzzsaw." He said.

"Yeah?"

"I have an idea."

"â€¦ And?"

"And what?"

"And what's the idea?"

"It's about taking care of Repora."

"Thanks." Buzzsaw grumbled. "That clears it up."

Iro activated his radio. "Let's seeâ€| Tank! Come in, Tank."

"Iro. This is Tank." Came the reply from the radio. "Is Iro in trouble?"

"No. I just need to ask a question."

Silence. Iro took that as a signal to go forward.

"When you were telling us about these guys in detail, you mentioned that Repora chased after the blue one trying to kill him. Do you happen to know why?"

"No."

"Okay, thenâ€| what was the blue one's name again?"

"Utarz."

"Last name?"

"Lano."

"Hmâ€| as in 'Lano Keep?"

No response.

"Oh, right, you've never been on Sanghelios. Well, thanks for that, could you ask the prisoner about it? She might know."

"Prisoner**s**." Tank replied. "Utarz is here."

"Oh. Well then just ask him."

"Wait."

"Yes, Tank?"

"â€|Can Tank come help find artefact?"

Iro blinked. "Uhâ€| no. Sorry Tank, but we need you keeping guard over the prisoners."

"Can't Buzzsaw-?"

"Tank, it's too late to change our minds now. We'll tell you when you can come with us."

No response.

"Okay then. Bye." Iro hung up.

"So what's your plan?" Buzzsaw asked.

"Well, it's quite simple really."

"Then elaborate."

"I am." Iro said crossly. "Repora has a grudge against Utarz for some reason. Maybe, if we could persuade him to find and kill Utarz, then we won't have to worry about him destroying the artefact."

This didn't add up with Buzzsaw. "Uhâ€¦ I thought that we had all agreed that we won't kill any of the 800 Squad."

"Apparently Utarz is dishonourable as hell, so I think we're in a good area there. Besides," He shrugged. "We won't be the ones killing him. It'll be Repora."

"Stillâ€¦" Buzzsaw was unsure. "How will we take advantage of this when we don't even know what happened?"

"That's Tank's job. And if that doesn't work, then we'll just try our luck."

"Great plan Iro." Buzzsaw said sarcastically. "You're an inspiration to us all."

* * *

><p>Tank rapped on the boulder.<p>

"Oh yeah, come in, why don't ya?" The reply was muffled, but definitely belonged to Utarz.

Tank rolled the boulder over and stood in the entrance. He saw Utarz sitting in a corner, bouncing a pebble off the wall and back while Miara stood in the centre of the cave and glared at Tank.

"What do you want?" She asked angrily.

"Tank has question for Utarz." He said simply.

"Ask away, big guy." Utarz grumbled.

"Why does Repora hate you?"

Utarz froze for a second, then went back to his cool attitude. "Second thoughts; go fuck yourself."

"Tank needs to know."

"Tank, as I've stated clearly, needs to go fuck himself."

Tank growled and pointed his cannon at Utarz. "Tank wants proper answer."

"See previous."

Tank looked at Miara.

She shrugged. "He never said."

Tank looked back at Utarz. "Tell me, or I will kill sister."

At this, Utarz laughed. "Yeah, right. She's way more valuable than me, you wouldn't dare kill her."

"Tell me, or I will kill you." Tank said.

Utarz sighed in defeat. "Fine. Tell your buddy that Repora hates me because of something my dad did, k?"

"Details."

"It happened when he was a kid."

"More."

"Yeah, that's all you're getting, heavyweight! Goodbye!" Utarz snapped.

Tank glowered at him and left. As he did, he noticed Miara looking at Utarz curiously. He ignored it, went outside and gingerly rolled the boulder back over the entrance, making sure that he didn't accidentally break it.

He radioed Iro. "Iro, Tank here."

"Tank. Good. Do you knowâ€|?"

"A bit." Tank replied. "It was something his father did when Repora was little."

"Huhâ€| thanks Tank."

And then he hung up.

"Good to feel needed." Tank grumbled.

* * *

><p>Author's notes

Short chapter here. Next one will probably be longer.

Thanks for watching.

Potato.

16. Older Wounds

The Halo Universe belongs to Microsoft Studios and 343 Industries. But these characters are my own creation and cannot be used without my permission. If you do use them without my permission, then Atar will eat your family in a stew of Sangheili victory and human defeat. Enjoy the show.

* * *

><p>The Sangheili 800 Squad

Chapter 15: Older Wounds

* * *

><p>February, 2550 (Human Calendar)

1732 Hours

Heretic Chasm

* * *

><p>"What actually happened between you and Repora?" Miara asked Utarz as he tried to get comfortable.<p>

Utarz sighed angrily. "I told you that I don't wanna talk about it, alright? So let's stop talking about it."

"You always want to talk."

"No, I always want to piss someone off. There's a difference."

Miara growled. "Just tell me anyway."

"What do you care?" Utarz demanded. "I thought you hated me."

"I've been asking you the same question for about a year about Tracer." Miara replied. "You haven't been giving me a reason for that, so I won't be giving you a reason for this."

"Bitch." Utarz muttered under his breath.

"Alright, fine!" Miara snapped. "I care because I want to know what caused my brother to fall so far from grace that he's gone straight through hell!"

"I'm sorry, _what?_" Utarz asked, sitting up. "How have I 'fallen from grace'?"

"Oh, where to begin?! You're lazy, dishonourable, you have no idea how to fight and you're rude to everyone you meet!"

"Iâ€|"

"You try to take control of my life and shape it to you stupid idealsâ€|!"

"Hey!" Utarz said loudly. "You may be seeing the BS meter when I say this, but I have had your best interests in heart for a long time now!"

Miara stared at him. "â€|My best interests."

"Yeah."

"Bullshit."

"Why do you think I push you away, huh? I don't want you to end up like me. Being a dick is the only way."

Miara glared at him. "What do you mean?"

"Remember when we were kids? You wanted to do everything with me. I had to be a dick to you, otherwiseâ€¦ well, we wouldn't have ended up much different from each other."

Miara stared at him. "â€¦Do you have music going on in your head when you say stupid stuff like that?"

"Yeah, I've got a whole freaking concerto." Utarz said sarcastically, lying back down. "They're playing several hopeful theme songs."

"You could've, I don't know, ****not**** have been a dick?" Miara suggested. "That would've gotten rid of the issue."

"Yeah, no. That was my life choice."

"Why?"

"Does it matter?" Utarz demanded.

"Quite frankly?" Miara said. "Yes. So tell me."

Utarz mumbled something incoherently. Then he sat up straight and sighed dejectedly. "Fine." He looked at her. "Did dad ever tell you anything about Repora?"

"No." She blinked. "I wasn't aware that dad knew Repora."

"He didn't. At leastâ€¦ not face to face."

"Elaborate."

"What? What does that even mean?"

"_Explain._"

"Oh. Wellâ€¦" He looked around carefully, as if he expected to see Repora come out of the walls. "You see, Repora used to part of a wealthy family in our Keep."

"Uhâ€¦ he was? What's last name?"

"Herno."

"â€¦Never heard of them."

"You wouldn't have." Utarz scratched his head. "Repora's dad had anâ€¦ issue with one of Dad's policies. And you know what they do when that happens."

"They tried to have Dad assassinated." Miara said, realising what that meant. "And they failed."

"Yeah. So Repora's dad got killed by ours, and then his family was kicked out."

"Ouch."

"It gets worse." Utarz said grimly. "They didn't have any relatives that they could live with. They wandered about the local desert for a

whileâ€¦ and then they sortaâ€¦ starved."

"Starved?" Miara wasn't sure she wanted to listen to this anymore.

"â€¦Yeah. Reporaâ€¦ had his mom and two sistersâ€¦ soâ€¦"

"And they died?"

"One by one. Until Repora was left."

Putting two and two together, Miara nodded. "That's why he's a lunatic. It also explains why he killed politicians."

"Yup."

"â€¦How do you know this?"

"He told me."

"Repora told you." Miara said in disbelief.

"â€¦When I was a kidâ€¦ around the time you thought that trying to eat wooden swords was a good ideaâ€¦"

"Wait, so I was a toddler then?"

"Yeah. I was training with Dad with some practice dummiesâ€¦ it was going well and I was shaping upâ€¦"

"Then?"

"Then the training court exploded." Utarz said.

Miara looked at Utarz. "Uhâ€¦ how old is Repora?"

"About my age."

"Soâ€¦ he managed to blow up the whole courtâ€¦ when you were both kids."

"Yup."

"How come I don't remember this?"

"Uhâ€¦ think you were somewhere with mom." Utarz shrugged. "I dunno. Anyway, he found me and would've probably shot my face off if Dad hadn't intervened. He called the cops and took off Repora."

"And?"

"While we were waitingâ€¦ Repora told be all this. He said that because of what Dad did to his family, he'll hunt me down and kill me."

"Soâ€¦"

"So Repora is basically Dad's fault is what I'm saying." Utarz said

bluntly. "My behaviour is like my personal 'fuck you' to Dad."

"That's it?" Miara asked. "Utarz, Dad didn't know what was going to happen. You can't predictâ€¦ Repora."

"I knowâ€¦ but still." Utarz grumbled. "The only reason I stopped resisting the army joining was to get away from the constant death threats, and even then Repora followed me."

Miara said nothing. So did Utarz.

Meanwhile, Tank moved his head away from the wall and thought about what he just heard.

* * *

><p>"Soâ€¦ something that Utarz's family did to Repora." Iro mused to himself. "That'll do nicely."<p>

"Don't we want to actually know what his family did first?" Buzzsaw asked. "You know, to _avoid _making us look like idiots?"

"Relax." Iro said. "All we have to do is pretend that we know what we're talking about. Then, we can use that to our advantage."

"Yeah, but how? We don't know what happened! We'll just make ourselves look like morons!"

"It's our best shot." Iro said defensively. "As far as I know, the other two don't exactly have unstable pasts."

"Once again, we won't know what the fuck we're talking about!" Buzzsaw complained. "We need to at least get a sense of what happened!"

Iro threw his hands into the air. "So what's your genius plan?!"

"I dunno, have Tank eavesdrop or something?! Because what we have right now sucks. Big time."

"Why would Utarz just openly talk about something that he refused to talk to Tank about under pressure?!" Iro argued.

"How do you know it was under pressure?"

"Deductive reasoning."

"So guesswork."

"Oh, shut up."

"Oh yeah, I haven't heard that one before." Buzzsaw said sarcastically. "No, it's not like you never want to listen to what _I _have to say. It's not like you always tell me to shut up and scout ahead invisibly like a good little soldier."

"Buzzsawâ€¦" Iro groaned. He knew what was coming and didn't want to listen to it.

"You just treat me with _soooo _much respect that it makes the Prophet's relationship with the Great Journey look like an abusive same-sex relationship!"

"Buzzsaw."

"I mean, it's not like us Grunts have to do all the work, is it?! We just have to sit to the side and let you Sangheili do everything for us!"

Iro sighed, trying to block the ranting out of his head.

"It's such a good thing that we don't live in a backwards society where the people at the top make the people at the bottom win all their little victories for them without getting any credit at all!"

"As I recall," Iro said. "Sangheili started treating you better after your race rebelled."

"â€|TouchÃ©."

"I'll think of something." Iro said. "Trust me."

Beep, beep, beep

Iro turned on his radio. "Yes?"

"Iro." Tank said on the other side. "Tank has information for you."

* * *

><p>Atar hadn't slept in the past two days. He had taken to slowing down whenever he started getting bleary-eyed, then hitting his head on a nearby tree to jolt himself back into alertness. It was an exercise that wasn't going well.<p>

But it was paying off, though. He had reached the base ahead of time.

He slowed down a lot in order to avoid falling off of the cliff, but then he found that there wasn't actually a way to take the Ghost down to the base that didn't end in more brain damage. So he abandoned the Ghost and climbed down to the base using only his hands and willpower.

Eventually, he reached the bottom. He turned around and looked at the purple mass.

"Good to be back." Atar said satisfactorily. "Now, to the radio room."

Atar ran into the base and to his room. It took a bit, but he got there in time. He turned on the radio and did his best not to sound to tired.

"This is General Atar of the Sangheili 800 Squad!" He said to the blank screen. "Come in command! Do you read me?"

"Yeah man, I read you." A lazy voice replied. "What's up, groovy man?"

Atar groaned. "Right. You."

The Jackal on the screen cocked his head to one side. "What'd you mean, man?"

"Never mind." Atar muttered. "I just forgot how much I hated you."

"Oh, that's cool man. What'cha need?"

For you to stop taking drugs. "I need backup. We've lost two of our soldiers and we need a replacement!"

"For both of your groovy dudes?"

"No. Just one."

"Alright. Give me a few seconds, man." The Jackal got up from his chair and walked off for a minute.

A few minutes passed. Atar was getting impatient.

Finally, the Jackal moved back into view. "Okay man, the boss has figured something out."

"Excellent! When is the soldier going to get here?"

"Well, I'll jump on one of your space shipsâ€|"

Atar double blinked. "Wait, what?"

"â€|and I'll be there tomorrow. What's up man? You don't look that well."

"Hold on. _You'll _be coming down?"

"Yeah, man. The boss said that I could be the replacement soldier. Something about getting rid of something nasty."

"WHAT?!" Atar shouted.

"Yeah. So I'll come up tomorrow, K, man? Sweet." The Jackal hung up.

Atar's eye twitched. "Himâ€| recruitâ€| ARRG!"

Atar threw his arms into the air and stormed to his bed. He requested reinforcements in order to _increase_ their odds of success, not _decrease_ them. What could a Jackal, a radio officer at that, possibly do to help them?!

Atar looked at his bed and sighed. No sense worrying about it now. He'd deal with it in the morning. Right now, he needed some serious rest.

On that thought, he plonked onto his bed and passed out instantly.

* * *

><p>Repora couldn't sleep. Usually, he had no problems with sleeping, especially at night, after he'd done a lot of shit.<p>

Unfortunately, Heaven and Hell were having a massive argument, and it's hard to rest when you've got two voices in your head shouting at each other.

"He must take up vengeance!" Hell snarled. "He must destroy the ones that betrayed him, the ones that he called 'friend'!"

"Forgiveness is rightness!" Heaven bellowed. "Is it not written in the Bible, 'You shall forgive someone seventeen times, then seventeen times over'? Or something to that effect, anyway."

"You read the Bible?" Hell said incredulously. "It's not even our religion!"

"It teaches us valuable lessons!" Heaven shouted back. "It tells us exactly how to deal with people like _you!_"

"What's that supposed to mean?!"

"You know what it means!"

"Hey, both of you shut up!" Repora snapped, finally having had enough.

Heaven and Hell went quiet.

Repora looked around, making sure that he didn't wake any of the others up. Then he whispered, "I can't sleep when you two are shouting, alright? I need to focus in order to relax."

"I'm just saying that we must take revenge!" Hell insisted. "Heaven is just too short-sighted toâ€¦!"

"Short-sighted? Me?!" Heaven spluttered. "I'll have you know that I can see a lot more than you can!"

"Yeah, that's nice." Repora muttered. "Look, if you don't let me sleep, then I'll go to a psychiatrist, alright?"

That shut them up.

Satisfied, Repora continued. "Listen. We sorted out this whole head thing, alright? You guys keep to yourselves unless I say otherwise. We talked about this!"

"What gives you that right?" Hell asked.

"It's my head." Repora replied bluntly. "You guys are just guests that I can kick out at any time."

"Actually, we represent your subconscious." Heaven said. "We're stuck in your mind. You **can't **kick us out."

"Do you want to tempt fate?" Hell demanded.

"I can become sane any time I want." Repora said. "So unless you two want toâ€¦"

Snap

"WHUH." Repora suddenly sprang up, Fuel Rod gun on shoulder. He turned towards the source of the noise.

"Hellllllllllllo?"

Nothing.

"Are you an animal?" Repora whispered quietly. "Are you gonna be part of our next stew?"

"We don't have a cook." Heaven pointed out.

"Oh yeah." Repora said. "Wellâ€¦ should I follow the noise?"

"â€¦May as well." Heaven said. "It might be a threat."

"Yes! Follow it!" Hell cackled. "Then, once we've found it, we'll kill it and strip its flesh off its bones!"

"â€¦That's not what I meant." Heaven replied.

"Who cares?" Repora asked, walking into the forest. "We'll kill it anyway, might as well make it interesting."

As he walked through the forest, Repora noticed that there was a trail of broken sticks and twigs that led in a linear direction. He knew that the smart thing to do would be to wake the others, but he wanted to have all the fun to himself.

Heaven knew that this was probably a trap. But Hell urged Repora to go forward. Repora had never before picked a more inconvenient time to listen to Hell.

Finally, he reached a clearing with several broken twigs. Standing in front of a tree was none other than Iro.

"Repora." He said calmly.

"Asshole!" Repora replied cheerfully. "Where's the midget?"

Buzzsaw materialised, annoyed. "I have a name."

"To me, you're Midget." Repora replied. He turned to Iro. "And you are Asshole!"

"Charming." Iro said drily.

"So, what do you want to tell me before you die?" Repora asked quizzically, absentmindedly loading his Fuel Rod gun.

"We want to convince you to not kill us." Iro replied. "And kill someone else."

"That's nice, but I'm afraid that my kill target slots are full." Repora replied sadly. "First there's you lot and then there's Utarz."

And he's currently at the bottom, to be honest."

"We want you to kill Utarz, actually." Buzzsaw pointed out.

"Oh!" Repora said cheerfully. "Wellâ€¦ hm."

"Something wrong?" Iro asked.

"Well, it's just that Utarz might be essential to the storyline later on." Repora replied. "I'm afraid that if I kill him now, then I might cause some sort of time paradoxâ€¦ thing. Or am I just stupid?"

Ignoring what Repora just said, Iro replied, "But surely you want revenge for what his family did to you."

Repora laughed well naturedly, then said "What?"

"Well, it's just that your whole family died because of them." Iro said. "If I were you, I would track them down to the ends of the universe just to kill them."

Repora stared at Iro blankly.

"Oh, dearâ€¦" Heaven murmured.

Hell grinned. "This guy is speaking my language."

"â€¦I don't know how you know about this," Repora said in a deadly tone. "But I'd advise you to not make me angry."

"Think about everything his family has done to you." Iro whispered. "Think about how long you've wanted revenge for themâ€¦ and now you have that chance."

Repora stared at him.

Satisfied that he had Repora's attention, Iro continued. "Utarz is in a ravine that we have fashioned into a prison. If you leave your comrades, then we can give you the coordinates."

"You're trying to distract me."

"True. But on the other hand, there's Utarz. The one who must bear the blame for what happened. Take your pick."

Repora stared silently at the ground.

"Repora," Heaven said cautiously. "He's trying to manipulate you. Don't let him do that."

"Aw, so what if he is?" Hell questioned. "We can finally kill Utarz. No more orders, no more duties. Nothing stopping us from putting one in his head."

"But the missionâ€¦" Repora thought aloud.

"Look, remember all those times you cursed Utarz?" Hell asked. "You were hell bent on destroying him. Now look at you. It's become a past time more than anything else. What happened to revenge?"

"We must forgive him." Heaven said desperately. "It was not his fault!"

"Trueâ€¦ but he's his father's only son. Killing him will punish them both. After all, they deserve nothing else."

Repora debated over it for a moment.

Then he looked up at Iro.

"So," Repora said. "Where's this ravine?"

* * *

><p>SNORE<p>

Utarz groaned. "I don't know how you sleep at night, with that thing going on out there."

"I do my best to ignore it." Miara replied.

Utarz turned over. That thing snored so loudly, you'd think that it was sound asleep. Utarz knew better though.

"I wonder if we could put a muffler in his mouth." Miara muttered.
"Or whatever he has."

"That'd be nice." Utarz sighed.

"I mean, seriously. Who sleeps that deeply?"

"He doesn't." Utarz said. "When I first came here, I accidentally shot my plasma rifle and it hit somewhere near him. Woke him right up."

"You did? Was that the crash that I heard?"

"No, that was him when he woke up."

"What?"

"Yeah, he spazzed out and hit the boulder."

"When he woke up."

"Yeah, that's what I just said."

Miara was silent for a moment.

Then she asked, "How loudly can you yell?"

Utarz looked at her. "What sort of question is-?" His eyes lit up.
"Oh! You meanâ€¦"

"Yeah."

"Ahâ€¦ right."

Utarz stood up and crept towards the boulder. He knew that it was

broken. Another forceful smash would probably do it.

He moved to the entrance and, as loudly as he could, shouted "WAKE UP!"

Miara winced.

Utarz quickly backed up.

WHAM

The boulder suddenly developed several cracks.

Then it fell apart.

"Okay, RUN!" Miara shouted, running for the exit. Utarz quickly followed. When he exited the cave, he quickly looked around for his rifle. He saw in the middle of the ravine and ran towards it.

Tank had completely frozen in shock upon breaking the rock. Realising what he did and what was about to happen, he quickly fired a few shots at Utarz, who was about to get the gun.

"Shit!" Utarz leapt forward in an attempt to dodge the rounds. He landed on the Plasma Rifle and immediately picked it up.

"Come on!" Miara shouted. Tank turned to her.

"Over here, big guy!" Utarz shouted, shooting at him.

Utarz ran towards the ramp, shooting a few shots at Tank in order to distract him. Tank, in turn, covered himself with his shield and fired several shots at them both. They ignored them and dodged the explosive blasts to the best of their ability.

Tank desperately charged at them, but they were way too fast. They had soon ran up the ramp and into the forest.

* * *

><p>Thank you all for taking the time to read this.

Potato.

17. Well, Shit

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* * *

><p>The Sangheili 800 Squad

Chapter 16: Well, Shit

* * *

><p>January 2550 (Human Calender)

0602 Hours

SSMB

* * *

><p>Atar awoke to an irritating sound coming from his headset.<p>

This was moderately annoying, as he had been experiencing a pleasant dream in which he had single-handedly won the war, destroyed all the humans and became the ambassador for the entire Sangheili race.

Ah well.

Atar identified the sound as the sound the radio made whenever someone was trying to call him. He pressed the button on his headset.

"This is General Atar." He grumbled, still sleepy. "Who's this?"

"Sir." Tracer's voice came out of the other side. He sounded panicky. "Repورا's missing."

"That'sâ€| that'sâ€|" Atar's eyes widened as he realised what Tracer was saying. "He's WHAT?!"

"He's missing!" Tracer exclaimed. "He was here last night and then this morning, he's just disappeared! We don't know what happened!"

Atar jumped up off of the bed. "How could he have simply gone missing?! Is there any sign of a struggle?!"

"No and there's no sign of his equipment either! It's like he just got up and left!"

Atar growled in frustration. They had just lost a valuable teammate and lost a few valuable days to stop the Heretics. The last thing they needed was _this._

"Well, find him!" Atar snapped. "He has the explosives and we need them!"

"How?! If we stop here for a few days trying to find him, then we'll lose ground to the Heretics!"

"Calm down, man!" Atar tried to think of a way to get around this new problem. "Rightâ€| well, continue on course! Radio Repورا, try to find out what happened! I'll get there as soon as possible! Atar out!"

Hanging up, Atar ran out of the room, down the corridor and into the snowy outdoors. He looked to the cliff and ran towards it. No time to waste. He had to get to the others as soon as possible.

He stopped as he realised something: Repora's workshop! There could be explosives in there!

Atar ran to the workshop and burst through the door. He looked around wildly for anything that looked remotely explosive.

This didn't seem to be difficult, as half the stuff in the room seemed to be explosive. There were a pile of plasma grenades, a slipspace bomb, some half-finished plastic explosives, a hot tub full of gunpowder and an atomic bomb suspended from the ceiling via brittle ropes.

Taking care to avoid the A-Bomb, Atar made his way to the plasma grenades, as they were the only things that were complete and Atar knew how to use them. He shoved them all into a wheelbarrow and pushed them outside.

Atar pushed the grenades all the way to the base of the cliff before realising that he couldn't get them up there. Atar growled in frustration and looked around for any other way to get the barrow up the cliff so he couldâ€¦

â€¦Erm, hold on. If he did get up there, how was he going to transport both the Ghost _and _the grenades?

"Okay, think." Atar muttered to himself. "How'll Iâ€¦? The idiot!" Atar realised. "He'll get here in a flying vehicle which I can then accommodate for myself! Perfect! All I have to do is to wait!"

So Atar sat down and waited.

* * *

><p>Utarz slowly woke up from a deep sleep.<p>

It had been a dreamless sleep, since he had fallen asleep from mere exhaustion, but he had welcomed the sleep at first. Kind of a bad move on his part, since he was supposed to be keeping a lookout for Tank.

Utarz looked around. Tank wasn't anywhere to be seen and Miara was still sleeping. So far, so good.

Utarz chuckled to himself. He couldn't believe that he had actually come up with that plan. Sure, Miara helped, but he was the one who noticed.

â€¦Maybe.

In any case, this proved that he wasn't useless.

Miara's eyes fluttered open. She sat up and looked at him. "Soâ€¦ we escaped."

"Yeah." Utarz would've grinned if he could. "Showed those heretics whose boss, huh?"

Miara rolled her eyes. "This is just one part of our goal. Now we need to find the others."

"Oh, yay." Utarz said sarcastically. "More time with Repora."

"â€|That stuff you said earlierâ€|" Miara said. "Y'know, aboutâ€|"

"Yeah?"

"How come Repora doesn't put actual effort into trying to kill you?"

Utarz shrugged. "I dunno. I think he forgot how angry he was with our family. I mean, he sure as hell didn't attack you on sight. I think that just because he saw me first, he tries to mess with me."

"Huhâ€|" Miara shrugged, not know how to continue the conversation.

"So should we tell the others we escaped?" Utarz asked.

"â€|Yeah."

"You're not being such a bitch towards me, you know?"

"Oh, piss off."

"There we go." Utarz pressed the button on his helmet. "R-DIO. Call Zen."

"_Calling Zen. Is this correct?_"

"Yeah."

"_Calling."_"

About five seconds passed. Then a voice came on the radio. "Utarz?!"

"Yo, Zen." Utarz said. "I got Miara."

"What?! Hold onâ€| you rescued her?!" Zen exclaimed.

"Well, no." Utarz admitted. "I got captured, then we figured out a way to escape, blahdy blah blah."

"Ohâ€| Atar'll be pissed."

"You heard from him?"

"Yeah, he's probably at the base by now."

"Good. So, where're you?"

"Iâ€| dunno. We're still going in the same direction, though."

"Course you are."

"â€|You might want to hurry, though. Repora's gone missing."

Utarz blinked. "Missing?"

Miara looked at him curiously, unable to hear what was going through the headset.

"Yeah, we just woke up and he wasâ€|" Zen trailed off.

"Yeah, I get that he's missing," Utarz stood up. "I want to know who the ****fuck ****let him go missing!"

"We didn't let him go! He just disappeared in the morning!"

"Well, where is he?! Have you contacted him?!"

"He hasn't responded to any of our attempted radio calls." Zen replied bitterly. "We've tried, but we just get redirected to a channel which doesn't exist."

"Oh, joy." Utarz said angrily.

"What's going on?" Miara asked, completely serious.

"Look, just get to us as quickly as possible, okay?" Zen ordered him. "Don't stray."

"Right. Sure."

"Alright. See you soon." Zen got off the radio.

"What's going on?" Miara asked.

"Repora's gone missing." Utarz explained.

"Missing?"

"Yup. So we have to get to the others as soon as we can. Top speed."

"Right now?"

"Well, something tells me that Repora didn't go AWOL just to go back and find a missing pencil or something. I say that we get back before he finds us, kay?"

"Will do." Miara agreed. "You have your gun?"

"What do I look like, a freakin' idiot?" Utarz demanded. "Of course I kept the gun!"

"How much battery is left?"

Utarz looked at that particular value on his HUD. "Ehâ€| about 85."

"That's a bit."

"I don't usually use the thing."

"I can see that." Miara looked in the direction of the Wraith. "Let's go."

* * *

><p>Stupid Tank. Stupid, stupid Tank.<p>

The prisoners escaped. He broke the boulder. He let his touchiness get the better of him.

STUPID TANK!

Tank ran through the forest, trying to figure out where they went. However, the melting snow had covered their tracks, so he knew that finding them was going to be near impossible. If only they weren't so quick, or Tank wasn't so slow.

Tank growled in frustration. He needed to tell Iro about this. Iro would know what to do. So he radioed Iro.

He waited a bit before Iro responded. "Tank? What's wrong?"

"Tank has failed you." Tank muttered.

"Failed me? What happened?"

"Prisoners escaped." Tank explained. "Don't know where they are."

"Oh." Iro sounded relieved. "Don't worry."

That was not the response Tank was expecting. "What?"

"You see, we've made a deal with Repora, the demolitions expert. We're going to let him kill Utarz in return for him not blowing up the relic."

"â€|That's not like you." Tank said concernedly.

"Don't worry, it'll be fine. We'll get back the artefact in no time." Iro hung up.

Tank knew that he shouldn't question Iro's orders, but he was genuinely concerned about this latest development. At the beginning of this, Iro didn't want any of the 800 Squad to get hurt. Now, he was letting a maniac destroy a member of the said squad.

"Not good." Tank mumbled.

"I dunno." Repora said, materialising behind Tank.

Tank swung around in alarm, almost hitting Repora. He would have done, except he jumped out of the way at the last moment.

"It's working pretty well for me." He finished.

Tank growled angrily, recovering from his hearts attack. "What do _you _want?"

"Funny story, actually." Repora said. "You see, Iro pointed me in the

direction of this chasm where he said Utarz was being held, then I arrived and didn't find anyone. It was rather disheartening."

"Prisoners escaped." Tank said bluntly.

"Oh!" Repora brightened up. "Awesome! Now it'll be much more fun! Wanna come?" Repora leaned in.

Backing up, Tank quickly thought of a reason to avoid being in the company of this lunatic. "Tank needs to stay put and wait for pickup. Iro said so."

Repora thought about this for a moment. "Hmmâ€¦ yeah. I think this is the point where your ride comes along, but I'm not sure. WELP," Repora pulled his Fuel Rod gun out of his arse. "Gotta go now. Utarz isn't going to kill himself."

And with that, he skipped off as if he was going through daisies rather than a forest full of brittle trees.

Tank watched him go and shook his head. "Tank needs drink."

As Repora skipped away, he thought about what he was doing. Technically, it was treasonâ€¦ well, it just **was **treason, but, hey; they did let a crazy guy into the army.

Now, to take stock. Fuel Rod gun, check.

POOF

"We shouldn't do this!" Heaven cried. "It's not right at all! Our role in the story is meant to be comic relief, not antagonist!"

Repora scoffed. "There's no rule that says that I can't have a change of heart every now and then. Besides, I like being spontaneous!"

"This isn't even the correct usage of the word 'spontaneous'!"

"Says who?"

"The dictionary!"

POOF

"Oh, relax." Hell scoffed, grinning like a madman. "Don't you see that Repora's finally going to accomplish his lifelong dream? Finally, the 'Lano family will pay for what has been done to us!"

Repora chuckled in the darkest possible tone. "Yesâ€¦ I must say, this is all quite exhilarating. Finally getting revengeâ€¦ hoo, hoo, hooâ€¦"

"It's not right!" Heaven said desperately. "This goes against our culture, our sense of-"

"Oh, shut up." Repora said irritably. "Go join Purgatory in the back

of my head."

And with that, Heaven disappeared from Repora's mental radar.

"So, Hell." Repora looked at the demon on his shoulder. "How should I go about finding Utarz?"

Hell cackled. "Well, the first thing to do is make them fear your presence. Let them know that you're coming for them."

"Them?"

"Well, why stop at Utarz? Wouldn't it be more tragic to kill both of Jenaz's children? _Really _make him feel it?"

"Hmmâ€¦ I guess you're right." Repora shrugged. "But that doesn't solve the problem of actually finding them."

"That's the second part." Hell said overenthusiastically. "Once we call them, we'll ask R-DIO to pinpoint their position!"

"She can't do that."

"Oh, right. Well, maybe we could just destroy the whole forest and hope that Utarz and Miara will be some of the things destroyed in the process."

"Sounds good." Repora nodded. "Soâ€¦ R-DIO! Call Utarz."

"_Calling 'Utarz'. Is this correct?"_

"Yup!"

"_Callingâ€¦"_

A few seconds passed. Then, Utarz picked up.

"Repora! Is that you?"

"Hello!" Repora said cheerfully. "How are you Utarz?"

"Dude, where the fuck are you? You just got up and abandoned the mission! The others are stressing their balls off!"

"That's niceâ€¦ uh, where are you at the moment?"

"I don't know, and if I did, I sure as hell wouldn't tell _you._"

"I guess that's smartâ€¦ after all, I'm the one that's hunting you."

"â€¦Uh, come again? You're _hunting _me?"

"Yup!" Repora said gleefully. "It's gonna be a fun little game; I'll be the hunter, while you'll be the doarmir!"

"â€¦You've fully lost it, haven't you?"

"I lost it a long time ago, as I'm sure you already know." Repora's

voice turned deadly.

"Hey, look man, that wasn't my â€"

"Don't care." Repora said coldly. "This is my personal 'fuck you' to your dad. I imagine that he'll be devastated to know that both of his kids died in a freak accident."

"Both?!" Utarz exclaimed. "Look, you can do whatever the hell you want to me, but if you touch my sister â€"

"Fine. I'll kill you first, then. But trust me," Repora's voice dropped to a whisper. "I will find you. And I will kill you both."

Repora let that statement hang before saying, "Catch you laterâ€|"

Then he hung up.

"So," Hell said. "Phase two?"

"Phase two." Repora agreed, loading his Fuel Rod.

* * *

><p>As the Wraith ploughed through the forest, Zen and Tracer were having a conversation, as Zen had gotten into the gun turret and they were close enough to hear each other without a radio.<p>

"So we get to the crash site, and thenâ€| what, exactly?" Tracer asked.

"I dunnoâ€|" Zen shrugged. "Guard it from the Heretics, I guess."

"So we shouldn't try to destroy it."

"We ****can't **destroy** it, because we don't have Repora with us. We have no explosives."

"Joy. Of course, we'd fail our first and only mission."

"Hey, don't think like that." Zen said encouragingly. "Otherwise we will fail."

"Hm." Tracer grunted.

"Look, we'll figure this out eventually, right? Miara's on her way, so that'll be good."

"Yeahâ€|" Tracer said. "Do you have her flamethrower?"

"Yeah." Zen felt his back to make sure the weapon was still there.

"You haven't tried to fix it, have you?"

"No. Why?"

"Miara wants to fix it by herself." Tracer explained. "She's kind of stubborn like that."

"Ah."

"I'd like to have a look at it when we have time, though."

"Sure."

A silence passed between them as they progressed through the forest.

"Do you know what it's like to love someone?" Tracer asked after a minute.

Zen stared at him. "That may well be the strangest thing you could've said to me."

"Yeah, ha, ha." Tracer replied sarcastically. "Seriously."

"What, like, family?"

"No."

"I wouldn't know!" Zen said, flustered. "I haven't had a relationship like that before."

"So you lied to Miara, then." Tracer sounded amused.

"Wha-? Oh, that. I wasn't thinking."

"Hm."

Zen rubbed his eyes. "Is there a point to this?"

"Yeah. I don't know if I love Miara in that way or not."

"Oh." Zen thought about something he could say. "Well. how do you feel about her?"

Tracer scratched his head. "Well. she's very self-reliant. I like that. She can be a bit stubborn at times, which is slightly annoying. She's also the only female I've had contact with in years so that's weird, I guess."

"I'm extremely concerned about her wellbeing at the moment, as Repora's on the loose with intents that only the Forerunners know, and if she comes back, I'll never let her out of my sight again, you know, to protect her, and if she doesn't come back, I know that I'll never forgive myself no matter what."

Tracer blinked. Then he looked up at Zen. "Wait. is that love?"

Zen shrugged. "I think so."

"Huh."

A noise sounded in the distance behind them.

Zen looked up, curious. "Did you hear that?"

"Hear what?"

In response to his statement, a green bolt of energy hit the trees in front of them, exploding outwards and setting the trees on fire.

The Wraith jolted to a halt, with Tracer slamming the brakes.

"Was that Repora?!" Tracer exclaimed.

Zen looked into the air. A few more green bolts were flying in the air towards them in several different directions.

"Floor it!" Zen shouted. Tracer understood and the Wraith sped off into the fire and trees before any more green bolts could hit them.

* * *

><p>Atar was too far away to hear any explosions, but every now and then, he would see a green flash over the cliffs and he would start worrying a bit more.<p>

"What is going on up there?" He muttered to himself, pacing back and forth in the snow. He was getting impatient and twitchy. The Jackal should've arrived by now.

After a few more minutes, during which he saw a few more flashes, he finally spotted the purple shape of a Phantom floating down from the sky. It flew over above the base and stopped in place.

"About time." Atar muttered. He shouted towards the ship, "Come down here!"

In response, the Phantom turned around until the rear door was pointing towards him and stayed in the air.

"OI!" Atar shouted. "I SAID, BRING IT DOWN HERE!"

The rear door opened. Atar could make out the body of the Jackal in it, raising something indistinct.

Then a blast of purple light materialised and hit the wheelbarrow of plasma grenades behind Atar.

The force of the resulting explosion blew Atar forwards into the snow. Recovering quickly, Atar rolled over to see the purple flames dancing in front of him. Not one of the grenades had survived the explosion.

Shock turned to anger. Atar leapt up and whipped out his Concussion Rifle just as the Phantom's door closed and it started to rise again. He fired a few shots at the vehicle, but it was for naught, as the ship ignored the plasma blasts and ascended into the sky.

"Traitor." Atar whispered as the ship hovered over the base and over the cliffs.

As he watched the Phantom disappear, Atar became alarmed to see a constant green glow over them. Something was happening up there and there was no reason for it to be a good thing.

A spike of hopelessness entered Atar's brain. How on Sanghelios were they supposed to destroy the canister now? Repora was AWOL, Miara was possibly dead and the team was running out of resources. Atar was willing to bet that most of his soldiers were running out of ammo at this point, with the possible exception of Utarz.

Atar, however, was a military man, so he told himself, _Keep moving. We'll improvise on what to do._

Atar made his way back over to the cliffs and started to climb, swearing to stab the Jackal in the stomach the next time he met him.

* * *

><p>Author's Notes

****And here you go! Another chapter!****

****Sorry about the wait, but it's the school holidays over here in Australia. I can't be bothered to do this and not waste time. So for what it's worth, enjoy the wait for the next chapter.****

****Potato.****

18. When It Hits the Fan

****The Halo Universe belongs to Microsoft Studios and 343 Industries. But these characters are my own creation and cannot be used without my permission. If you do use them without my permission, then Iro will assassinate you in the most painful form possible. Enjoy the show.****

* * *

><p>The Sangheili 800 Squad

****Chapter 17: When It Hits The Fan****

* * *

><p>"You know, I do like a good fire." Miara commented over the flames. "But this is just ridiculous."<p>

Utarz couldn't agree more. The green-red flames were eating up every single thing in the forest. The trees, probably due to their incredible thinness, were burning up extremely quickly. The snow had melted into water, which was just as quickly evaporating. Utarz could barely see a thing.

"I think this resembles a nightmare I had once!" Utarz said loudly. "Now what?"

A tree fell behind them with a crash. Utarz turned around at the sound, just in case it was Repora finding them.

"We need to keep moving!" Miara said firmly. "We can't let Repora find us!"

"Sounds good!"

"We also need to find the others, so we'll continue the way we were going before!"

Utarz gestured at the flames. "Through that?!"

Miara shrugged. "It's the fire, or Repora. Take your pick."

Utarz growled. "Alright, let's go!"

The two ran through the burning forest, dodging fires and jumping over panicking creatures. They didn't slow down for a moment, lest Repora find them and do the unspeakable to them.

Utarz had never been this scared since Repora first joined the team. He had always considered 'death by Repora' to be something that wouldn't happen to him. However, after hearing Repora's threat, he had, absurdly, only now realised that Repora was a psychopath who would stop at nothing to rip Utarz apart piece by piece. If he didn't die in this inferno, then he would get blown to bits or tortured until he could no longer scream for mercy.

So that put a damper on his already shitty day.

As they ran through the blaze, Utarz heard a mad cry echo over the crackling of the flames. Assuming that it was Repora, Utarz took out his plasma rifle and scanned his surroundings quickly.

They ran for a bit more, but then something occurred to Utarz and he slowed down.

"What are you doing?!" Miara demanded. "Keep moving!"

"Can't we just hide somewhere until this all blows over?!" Utarz shouted.

"Where are we going to hide?! If we hide in a cave, it'll just fill up with smoke! We just have to keep moving!"

"I can't tell which way we're even going!" Utarz claimed. "For all we know, we're heading right to Repora as we speak!"

"We can't stay still, or we're going to die!" Miara shouted back. "Move!"

"We need to find a place to hide!" Utarz insisted. "At least with that, we won't have the danger of burning to death!"

"Where the hell would we find somewhere like that?!"

As if on cue, a bunch of trees fell over, revealing a cave a few metres away.

Utarz and Miara stared at the newly revealed enclave, surprised at the convenience of the situation before remembering that they were surrounded by flames.

"Alright, get ready!" Utarz shouted. "It's gonna get hot!"

Miara nodded and the two ran for the cave.

* * *

><p>Buzzsaw and Iro ran desperately through the forest, looking for ways to avoid being cooked to perfection. Unfortunately, the blaze was all around them, with no places to hide.<p>

"Great idea with Repora!" Buzzsaw shouted angrily. "Real stroke of genius!"

"Oh, how was I supposed to know what would happen?!" Iro snapped. He activated his commlink. "Tank! Tank, can you hear me?!"

"Tank hears you!" Tank replied over the radio. "What is happening?! Forest is on fire!"

"Just keep calm and keep running!" Iro ordered him. "Don't stop, or you're dead!"

"Tank knows!" Tank replied. "Tank is - !" There was sudden static on the radio.

"Tank!" Iro shouted. "Tank, can you hear me?!"

"Well, we're dead." Buzzsaw muttered. "After all this time, we're killed by idiots."

"Shut up!" Iro roared.

"Well," A reedy, intelligent voice said over the radio. "That's not a good welcome for your saviour."

Iro froze. "Gears?"

Buzzsaw double-blinked. "Whoa, wait, what? Gears is here?"

"It seems that you're in a spot of bother at the moment." Gears said matter-of-factly. "Would you like me to swing around on the Phantom and pick you up?"

"Yes, Gears, that will do nicely!" Iro replied.

"Excellent. Just let me pick up Tank first."

"Fine, whatever, just make sure that you rescue us as well!"

"Very well." Gears hung up.

"So, hold on," Buzzsaw said. "Since when was Gears on this planet?"

"I don't know, but at the moment, I just don't care." Iro muttered.

They had to wait a while, the flames dancing all around them, but they eventually spotted the purple form of the Phantom flying in the sky.

"HEY!" Buzzsaw shouted. "DOWN HERE!"

The Phantom floated down to them, the doors opening up as it reached the ground.

Tank was in the entrance, shouting, "In! Get in!" The two happily obliged, jumping inside the Phantom to be spared the fate of being burned to death.

The Heretics backed away from the door as it closed up and the lights flickered on. The ship rose up into the air and stayed there.

Iro looked around the ship. It wasn't one of theirs, he realised. It wasn't overly personalised and it was rather barebones.

He looked at the driver, who turned to him. It was a Jackal, clad in grey armour, a beam rifle on his back. His grey eyes held a high intelligence and the way he was looking at him was slightly distrustful.

"Gears." Iro said bluntly.

"Iro." Gears greeted politely in the same reedy voice. He turned to the other one and greeted them as well. "Buzzsaw."

"Yo." Buzzsaw nodded. "When did you get here?"

"About two-point-eight minutes ago." Gears replied. "The leader of the 800 Squad called me down to this planet yesterday. Good thing too." He looked at Iro. "We wouldn't want our fearless leader to have been fried."

Iro glared at him. "Hold your tongue."

"Oh, yeah!" Buzzsaw blinked. "We sent you to infiltrate the Covenant! How's the accent?"

Gears sighed. "You mean for me to go into 'idiot mode'?"

"Yeah!" Buzzsaw said enthusiastically. "I love it when you do it!"

"No." Gears said firmly. "Whenever I make myself act like that imbecile, I have to perform an exorcism just to get it out of my system."

The others looked at him for a while.

"Anyway," Gears gestured towards the console. "I just arrived to find the whole forest burning down and no sign that Zen has joined us. Could someone please fill me in on what's been going on in my absence?"

"Ohâ€¦ yeahâ€¦" Buzzsaw scratched his head. "Uhâ€¦ long storyâ€¦"

"When we arrived, we did make contact with the 800 Squad." Iro explained. "But Zen had no interest in joining us at all."

"Ah. A shame." Gears sighed. "So then what?"

"We attempted to convince them of our plight by giving them the relic."

"What?!" Gears spluttered. "You tried to- do you have any idea how valuable the relic is?!"

"We were going to shoot it right in the middle of their base on an escape pod." Iro continued, ignoring the outburst. "But **Buzzsaw **miscalculated the distance, so it misfired."

"Hey, I said sorry." Buzzsaw pointed out.

"We then learned that the 800 Squad intended to destroy the relic, so we've been racing to see who gets to it first."

"Iro wanted squad to slow down." Tank interjected. "So Iro convinced the white one to kill the blue one."

"The white oneâ€¦ Repora." Gears shook his head. "So I take it that Repora's responsible for this mess below us."

The other three nodded.

"You're all imbeciles." Gears muttered.

Iro glared at him. "We needed them to-"

"You needed to avoid conflict at all costs." Gears interrupted. "Was that not your very specific order?"

"We accomplish nothing by discussing past events." Iro said angrily. "Right now, we need to get to the artefact before they do."

"Very well." Gears turned back to the console. "Which direction?"

* * *

><p>About 2 hours laterâ€¦

* * *

><p>Zen stood at the edge of the once-untouched forest. It was nothing more than a sheet of ash, now. The snow had melted completely in the blaze, leaving the ground wet and mushy. There was no sign of any life anywhere.<p>

He tried the radio again. "Miara. Can you hear this? It's Zenâ€¦ we're at the edge of the forest, not far from the capsule. If you can hear this, please respond."

Nothing.

Zen waited for a little bit more before giving up.

"Anything?" Tracer asked from the Wraith.

Zen shook his head. "Nothing."

Tracer didn't say anything.

"Do you think she's dead?" Zen asked.

"â€|It's possible." Tracer replied.

Zen looked ahead. He could clearly see the landscape now. The capsule was in the far distance, glinting in the sunlight. In the sky was the familiar shape of a Phantom. What it was doing here was anyone's guess, but Zen was willing to bet that it wasn't one of theirs.

Zen climbed up onto the Wraith turret. "We better keep moving. The Heretics will get to the capsule soon."

Tracer didn't do anything.

"Tracer." Zen said calmly. "Let's move."

"What's the point?" Tracer asked miserably. "This was supposed to be a simple mission. Any other competent squad would've gone to the site, blown up the pod and gotten back to base in the time span of three hours. We, on the other hand, have accomplished nothing, defeated nobody and we've lost two soldiers, three if you count Utarz."

"They're fine." Zen tried to assure him. "At least they've begun the Great Journey before we have."

Tracer snorted. "Small comfort."

Zen blinked. "What do you mean?"

"If I recall correctly, the Great Journey requires the use of the Halo rings. I've yet to hear any news of the discovery of such a thing."

"We'll find it." Zen insisted. "Have faith in the Prophets."

"Faith." Tracer muttered.

"They will find it. Then Miara's death won't be in vain."

"It already is, though. That's what frustrates me."

"Don't be stupid." Zen said forcefully. He saw the Phantom start to lower to the ground in the distance. "Let's go already."

There was a pause in the driver's seat. Then, Tracer said aggressively, "Do you even **care **that she's gone?"

"Yes, but we have to mourn her later." Zen insisted. "Right now, we have a job to do. He have to stop the Heretics from-"

The front hatch flew open. Tracer climbed out and glared at Zen, irrational anger radiating off of him.

"Heretics! Prophets!" Tracer shouted at him. "Does everything you lot say have to be rooted in religion?!"

Zen stared at him. "What do you mean? Those Heretics have betrayed the Covenant! They've refuted the Great Journey and- !"

"The Great Journey is a religion!" Tracer yelled. "A myth! A fairy tale! It does not exist, it never has existed and it never will exist!"

A tense silence followed this statement.

"What?" Zen said quietly.

"I am a man of science." Tracer said angrily. "A man of reason. Neither of those fit into religion. Gods? Ascension? These are the ramblings of someone with his head stuck inside a bucket. It doesn't make any sort of rational sense. Ergo, it doesn't exist."

Zen remembered something that Tracer said at the beginning of the trip, something that had confused him the first time. _'They respected my decision.'

Isâ€| that why you _chose _toâ€|?" Zen said cautiously. "Did you deliberately act like a bad soldier?"

"Partially." Tracer admitted. "I purposely sabotaged my intellectual tests, but I didn't even have to try with my practical."

Zen stood up and glared at him. "But why?! Do have any idea how much of a dishonour-?!"

"I figured that the 800 Squad would be the only place where I wouldn't be surrounded by religious nuts!" Tracer snapped. "It may be dishonourable, but I would've only been a hindrance if I hadn't gone here!"

The two men glared at each other.

"So if you don't believe in the Great Journey," Zen said slowly. "Then why would you help us?"

"Because I'm not an idiot." Tracer replied. "The only reason the Covenant exists is because of this 'Great Journey'. What the Heretics want to do is to destroy a whole civilisation just because the primary belief is false. Would you want to do that?"

"No, because-

"Exactly." Tracer turned around and sat back in his seat.

The two stood in silence for a minute.

"I'm going to try and contact Miara again." Zen said bluntly, getting out of the vehicle. "After that, we're leaving."

Tracer grunted.

Standing a fair bit away from the tank, Zen turned on the radio

again. "RDIO, call Miara."

"_Contact 'Miara'. Is this correct?"_

"Yes."

"_Calling 'Miara'â€|"_

Zen waited for a bit.

"_Contact 'Miara' is unavailable. Her radio unit is either switched off, or damaged."_

"That wasn't the case two minutes ago."

"_Unknown command. List of commands are-"_

"Oh, shut up." Zen said irritably, switching the radio off.

"Anything?" Tracer called from the Wraith.

Ignoring him, Zen hopped back onto the gun turret.

"â€|Very well." Tracer sighed, starting up the Wraith.

Zen looked around the charred landscape one last time, this time searching to see whether Repora was close by. There was no sign of the white armour or the yellow shoulder-mounted cannon.

Zen blinked. Then he pulled out his sniper rifle. "Hold on, Tracer."

Tracer turned the Wraith back off. "What?"

Zen looked through the scope. "I think I just found them."

* * *

><p>Miara's radio buzzed again.<p>

"Shut that off!" Utarz growled.

"Alright, alright!" Miara snapped quietly, switching off her radio.

Utarz peeked out of the cave. "Crapâ€| the forest is gone."

"Completely?"

"Yeah." Utarz looked around the destroyed landscape. "Nowhere to hide. We go out there, we die."

"Do you have any ideas?" Miara asked.

"Wellâ€| one." Utarz admitted. "Butâ€| I dunno if it'll work."

"Does it have a chance?"

"How should I know? I can't predict Repora's emotions!"

Miara glared at him.

"Yeah." Utarz muttered. "But it'll only work if I can get close enough to talk to Repora."

"We'll risk it."

"Lemme just repeat that: we have to get ****close ****to Repora!"

"Yeah, and I said that we'll risk it!"

"Fine." Utarz stepped out of the cave, looking everywhere for a potential attack. Miara followed him.

"Should we call the others?" Miara asked.

"Dunnoâ€¦| probably, if we don't find them."

"Rightâ€¦|" Miara looked up. "Well, I think we found them."

"Huh?"

Miara pointed ahead. A large purple blob was on top of a large hill in the close distance.

"Oh." Utarz followed her finger. "Well, problem solved."

"There's still Repora, though."

"Yeah, but he won't try to attack us when there's a big tank protecting us."

"I might try to kill you before you get to the tank, though." A male voice said behind Utarz.

"Well, yeah, but once-" Utarz froze. Then his eyes closed and he muttered under his breath, **"**Fuck.**"**

Utarz slowly turn around to look at Repora, who was standing right in front of him, Fuel Rod Gun pointed right at Utarz's face. Alright, so that was phase one of his plan taken care of.

"Hello." Repora said darkly.

"Repora," Miara said carefully. "If you fire that thing at that range, then you'll kill yourself as well."

Repora shook his head. "No, he'll die. I've survived worse."

"Yeah, he has. I'll deal with this." Utarz assured her.

"That's funny." Repora chuckled. **"**You'll ****deal with this."

"Yeah. I can hardly believe it myself." Utarz muttered.

"So. Can't say I haven't been looking forward to this. I mean, it's

been almost fifteen years! I was starting to wonder how much longer I would have to wait." Repora tightened his grip on his gun. "Not much longer, though. A few seconds maybe."

"Can you give me, like, a minute or two?" Utarz asked.

"Why would I do that?"

"Last words?"

"Yeah, sure." Repora scoffed. "Because you totally deserve that honour."

"If you kill me now," Utarz added. "Then you'll never know my dad's bank code."

Repora considered this for a moment.

"Fine." Repora shrugged. "You have thirty seconds."

"REPORA!"

Utarz turned. Zen and Tracer, who had presumably seen them, were running down from the Wraith and towards them.

Zen pulled out his rifle and pointed it at Repora. "Repora, stand down!"

"Nope."

"Now!"

"Just give me a second! Geez." Repora muttered. He turned back to Utarz. "So, what were you gonna say?"

Utarz sighed. This was it. The next two words to come out of his mandibles would simultaneously humiliate him and strip him of all the dignity he possessed, and they would be the most noble and humble words he would ever say in his life.

He took a deep breath and said clearly, "I'm sorry."

"That's great." Repora said in his trademark psychotically cheerful voice. "Now, prepare tooooooooooâ€¦". Repora slowed and stopped, then lowered his gun. "Wait, what?"

"I'm sorry." Utarz repeated. "I'm sorry for what my dad did to your family. For what _my family_ did to yours."

"â€¦I'm not gonna lie." Repora sounded confused. "I didn't expect this."

"But all that? It's in the past." Utarz continued. "Fifteen years in the past."

"So what? This is revenge. Revenge takes a while."

"Look, your dad knew the risks when he sent those assassins!" Utarz argued. "He knew what would happen if they failed, and he did it anyway. I'm not saying it was his fault." Utarz added quickly. "He

was well within the law and he had every right to do what he did. That's fine."

"Mm-hm."

Realising that he was losing track of what he was saying, Utarz said, "Basically, trying to kill me is fine. But abandoning the mission just to kill me? Does that really do anything for your precious honour?"

To Miara, this was an impressive move she wasn't aware Utarz was able to pull off. He clearly either knew a lot more about honour than he let on, or he really knew Repora well enough to know what could throw him off track.

To Utarz, this was desperate word-throwing.

Repora stopped moving for a second and really thought about that last part.

"Uhâ€¦ give me a sec." He said, turning away, giving Utarz a momentary reprieve.

POOF

"Hey, you two." Repora muttered to the voices. "I need some advice here."

"Honestly, Repora." Heaven sighed. "You should already know the answer."

"Yeah! Kill them!" Hell urged.

"No, listen to Utarz!" Heaven snapped. "As much as we all hate his family, you have to admit that he has a point."

"So what?" Hell growled. "Look, we have waited YEARS for this moment. He is right there, at our mercy! Heck, they're all at our mercy! KILL HIM."

"Ignore Hell. Utarz may be your archenemy, but he's still your teammate. And there is no greater dishonour than killing your teammate."

"There are tons more dishonourable things than that! We've done hundreds more dishonourable things than that and we did it 'cause it was fun! KILL HIM!"

"Ehhhhhhhhhhhhhhâ€¦" Repora tapped his feet. "Alright, uhâ€¦ lemmeâ€¦"

Utarz looked at Repora cautiously as he talked to himself, ready to bolt just in case his plan didn't work.

After an agonizing five minutes, Repora finally turned around and nodded. "Okay Utarz. I won't kill you."

"Thank the _gods_." Utarz said, everyone else letting out a sigh of relief. "You know, for a moment there, I was-"

"But I will when this is over." Repora interjected quickly.

"-really worried oh GOD DAMMIT, REPORA!"

* * *

><p>I'M BACK!

End
file.